

Two years on the farm of Uncle Sam. With sketches of his location, nephews, and prospects. By Charles Casey.

TWO YEARS ON THE FARM OF UNCLE SAM.

WITH SKETCHES OF HIS LOCATION, NEPHEWS, AND PROSPECTS.

LC

BY CHARLES CASEY.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CITY OF WASHINGTON

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1852.

fsr E166 C33

LONDON: Printed by Samuel Bentley and Co., Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

INTRODUCTION.

The following pages are the result of observations made during two years in the United States, *viz.* 1849 and 1851–2. The views given of America, and the passage thereto, have usually been taken from the poop-deck, and Astor House—and are consequently hackneyed. A log of the voyage from “tween decks” has, therefore, at least novelty to recommend it, and will demonstrate that those who would improve the condition of the Emigrant during the Trans-Atlantic voyage are not fastidious reformers. In the sketches of America and Americans I have chosen the bye-ways as well as the highways for

Library of Congress

observation, and have bestowed eulogy or censure in accordance with fact. vi Doubtless the English and American reader will find points to criticise, and opinions to dissent from; but if I have been able to preserve the candour of a Cosmopolite, I am satisfied with patriotic strictures.

C. CASEY.

New York, *July*, 1852.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I. A "LINER" IN 1848.

Being the Log of one who tried a 'tween-deck Passage—a Guide to the Uninitiated—and Record of a Thirty Days' Life at Sea. 1

CHAPTER II. MANHATTAN IN 1848.

New York.—Its Bay.—Its Appearance—and Citizens.—Fire-Companies.—Mode of Living.—Destiny, &c. 29

CHAPTER III. THE HUDSON.

River-Steamers.—Palisades.—Highlands.—Arnold.—View from the Katskill,&c. 41

CHAPTER IV. A FIRE, AND THE FALLS.

Albany.—The Great Fire.—Incidents.—Genesee Valley.—Packets and Liners.—Incidents thereon.—Niagara.—Anecdote. 55

viii

Library of Congress

CHAPTER V. THE STAGE (NOT DRAMATIC).

Buffalo.—Genesee Falls.—Sam Patch.—Cattarangus Indians.—Clerical Republicanism.—Valley of the Genesee.—Stage and Sleigh Travel—and Incidents. 89

CHAPTER VI. OHIO, THE BEAUTIFUL.

Cleveland.—Sandusky.—State Legislature at Columbus.—Disquisition.—Cincinnati.—The Ohio to Cairo. 101

CHAPTER VII. THE MISSISSIPPI.

Incident on the River.—Anecdote.—A Californian Group.—Broad-horns—Islands.—Colour.—Memphis.—Planters' Houses and Cotton-Fields.—First Impression of Slavery.—Second ditto.—A Party of Chocktaws.—Thunder-storm.—The Emigrant's Grave.—A Whirlwind.—Zachary Taylor.£i A close Shot. 121

CHAPTER VIII. THE STAGE (AGAIN).

Western Staging.—Incidents—Dickens.—Anecdote of a Hoosier.—Compagnons de Voyage.—A Driver's Point of Honour.—A Western Blue-Stocking. 155

CHAPTER IX.

The Alleghanies.—Harper's Ferry.—Philadelphia.—Pittsburg.—Monongahela.—A Kentuckian.£—The Mountains. £—Laurel Hill.—Braddock's Grave.—Harper's Ferry.—Baltimore.—Philadelphia. 181

ix

CHAPTER X. A CHAPTER OF MANY HEADS.

Library of Congress

National Bank.—Musquitos.—Law and Physic.—Murder Trial; Superior Court.—Learned Counsel's Speech in Common Pleas.—Chewing.—Profanity.—Railroad Prejudice. Mutual and National.—Irish Emigrant.—Habits of Life of the Americans.—Illustrations.—Boarding Houses, Hotels, &c.—Progress.—Newspapers.—Disquisitive Differences between the People of America and any of the European Nations.—Universal Suffrage. 199

CHAPTER XI. NEW ORLEANS.—A NIGHT SCENE.

Wreckers on the Florida Coast.—The Belaize.—New Orleans Runners.—A Man Overboard.—Meleée.—Markets.—Slaves Sales.—Battle of Chalmatti. 245

CHAPTER XII. WESTWARD, HO!

Rolling Prairies of Illinois.—Theoretic Speculations—Indian Mounds.—Starvation Rock.—Soil.—Destiny.—Oak Openings of Michigan.—Milwakie.—Moonlight on Michigan.—An American Auctioneer out West.—A Sketch *en passant*.—Ice in Erie.—An Explosion. 267

TWO YEARS ON THE FARM OF UNCLE SAM.

CHAPTER I. A LINER IN 1848.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll. Byron.

“Round went the windlass merily, Taut grew the massive chain, Uprose the mighty anchor, Loosed is the cable's strain; And the godly barque floats gallantly On the receding tide, Out —out upon the western sea, The western sea so wide.”

May 28, 1848.—having been duly cheated, persecuted, and hustled in that most thievish of ancient or modern ports, Liverpool—found myself located, on the above date, in the superior accommodations of the celebrated fast-sailing, copper-fastened, Black Bull, line-ship, “Fidelia,” B 2 Yeaton, master (according to advertisement, if contrary to fact.) At nine o' we hauled out through the massive docks into the Mersey, where we were taken in tow

Library of Congress

by a tug, and steamed some 30 miles to sea, when all passengers were ordered on the quarter-decks, their names called, and checked by the agent' list. A search-party went below and found a man stowed away in a box: he was hustled on deck, and transferred to the tug, at the quarter-rail of which he stood waving mute adieus to his friends who had smuggled him on board. Never have I seen despair more vividly expressed than in that man's face; so overcome was the poor fellow that he could not speak, not scarcely raise his arm to answer the shouted advice of his friends.

"All right, loose away"—we slipped our cable, and shaking our canvas to the wind, stood away for the wide Atlantic. The day was particularly fine; the graceful and undulating motion of the ship exhilarating; the crew singing cheerily as they hauled taut the braces, the passengers in good spirits, and all

"Looking lovely as Hope."

About noon had some coffee, and adjourned to observe the ship fire (that appropriated to the 3 passengers for cooking) which presented a desperate scene: crowded in and struggling, was a mass of hungering humanity, each with some cooking utensil; old men, young women, boys and girls, abusing, fighting, and uproarious they wedged in, a slight fissure being ever and anon opened to permit the exit of some one with a steaming pot, who usually appeared as if his face had undergone some cooking process; and then all was Babel again, strength being the rule, and patience the exception. Turned into my berth at ten o'clock, slept but little, arose with headache, but having had some coffee, felt better; went on deck and found the sea calm, the winds gentle, and our vessel making easy way: found our course to be due north. On enquiry found we were going out by the North Channel passage. Dined off collared head, onion, and water; the fire, a scene as usual.

June 4th.—Slept better, had breakfast of tea, read treatise on the Trinity, by Jones (a close written argument), turned into berth at noon, slept till three o'clock, when I was

Library of Congress

called on deck by my berth-mate; went up, and found we were close in on a bold coast, with mountains in the distance; the shores of Scotland and Ireland visible all day. In the evening, about an hour B 2 4 before sundown, were boarded by a fishing boat off Tery Island, from which we purchased some cod-fish, many weighing twenty pounds, for sixpence; the captain bought forty-two, which he had part pickled, and part distributed to the poorer passengers. A woman who had eluded the search-party, being hidden in a bed, but who afterwards turned up when we were at sea, was now ordered on deck by the Captain to be sent ashore in the fishing-boat. She was young, and well favoured; on learning her sentence she cried piteously, so as to cause the skipper (who, though a rough, was a kind man at bottom) to revoke his decree, and he finally allowed her to go below, and assist the steward. I kept the deck till eleven o'clock in company with a townsman, Mr. Doyle, talking over scenes familiar to both. The sunset on this and the previous evening was glorious in the extreme, such as an ocean sunset alone appears, when the life fountain sinks by inches beneath the undulating horizon, tinting cloud and wave with celestial splendour.

June 5th.—Rose betimes; land still in view; vessel rolled heavily during the night, and sickness commenced in earnest this morning: made breakfast of coffee prepared (oh! genius of Soyer) in the vessel which my bacon had been boiled in on the previous evening. While partaking of it 5 with a gusto, am surrounded by persons in every phase of sea-sickness, and have concluded a sea-voyage to be an infallible cure for formality, fastidiousness and a languid appetite (should like to see a Brummel on a month's voyage in rough weather). Had the last glimpse of Erin, now far, far away to the east, like a haze cloud on the water, with the wide western sea on the other hand, the scene causing those emotions of the mind so uncontrollable by the will, which many count weakness, but do so only because they speak from theory, for to him who sees the land of his nativity, the home of his fathers and his childhood, that spot of the green globe round which twine the fondest remembrances of the soul, sink beneath the distant wave, perhaps for ever to him, while before him lies the trackless deep for many a thousand miles, and beyond is the

Library of Congress

land of the stranger, cold in contemplation, though it may be the home of freedom, and bright with the smiles of plenty; for him, I repeat, to feel the deep emotions of the exile, and that yearning sorrow which words may not express, is not weak,—or at least if so, it is a weakness as noble as it is natural. The main cabin is now beginning to have its interest, a scene to defy even the genius of a Cruikshank; of the details, more hereafter. At present I am disposed to meditate, and the subject of my cogitations, the reflection of how much is contained in that single phrase so often lightly spoken, “Gone to America,” familiar now as an household word, yet once sufficient to immortalize the second voyage of the Genoese adventurer, who, by the way, suffered much less privation than the steerage-passenger of the nineteenth century, of which passenger let us enumerate some of the items that occur in his transition from serf to freeman. Well, *imprimis*, there is the sundering of social ties that have twined for twenty or thirty years around the heart; secondly, the severe self-denial necessary to raise means, of transit; thirdly, the exorbitant charges of hotels, &c., until he reaches the place of sailing; fourthly, the thievish and sophisticating ship-agents; the Shylock money-changers, and those tolerated highwaymen, known as man-catchers and fortiers; venal police, who seem in league with all villainies, and lenient with all villains; the rude accommodations on board, which on paper appeared spacious, airy, comfortable, &c.; blaspheming seamen, the fire and water trials, with all and sundry the less salient points, such as wet feet, clothes and bedding:—which contribute to make up the true translation of that much used, but little understood phrase, “gone to America.” However, let us see, it will bear another: there is the bracing up of the mind, the glowing pictures of hope, dormant energies called out, which the owner knew not of; the cheerful, clannish communicativeness of your fellow passengers, each with his little store of bright anticipations; the novelty of the everlasting circle of waters, which, speed as we may, we are ever in the midst of; the fresh, keen, penetrating air; the clear expanse of ether over head, (when the weather is fine); the exciting bustle of the ship, when the first mate takes his stand at the capstan on the poop, the second mate at the waist, and all the seamen at their stations, the third mate on the fore-castle.

Library of Congress

First mate (in stentorian voice). "Take your places."

Second mate. "All ready, sir."

First mate. "Helm a lee."

Man at the wheel. "Aye, aye, sir."

First mate. "Tacks and sheets let go! and haul your braces! haul!"

When the mountainous canvas swings obedient on the opposite side, and she falls gracefully away on the other tack, then the weather-tanned seamen—embodiments of endurance, courage, and strength; the goodly vessel buoyantly making her way over the mountain waves as if conscious of her mission, with many other incidents, contribute to furnish the counterbalancing pleasures consequent on going to America.

June 6th.—The morning of this day misty and fresh, which induced me to go below, and write this log. The weather cleared off by noon; came on deck a short time, but went below and slept till four o'clock; had dinner, and walked the poop till eleven o'clock. The night fine, with a pale crescent moon.

June 7th, Saturday.—The wind had blown stiff during the night, and was now so strong that we had to take in our top-gallant sails, the sea looking fearfully portentous, the swell so high that the stern-lights had to be shut down, and the hatches put on: by midday the wind increased to a storm, and the pitch and reel of the vessel caused a general sickness; I felt so ill that I had to keep my berth. Towards evening, one of the passengers, who slept beneath me, came down from the deck drenched, with mortal terror in his eye, and shaking me, ejaculated, "It's all up! we are all lost!" I had been listening with increased anxiety to the crash of the waves upon her bow, and the furious wash alongside, and that indescribable roar produced by the sea and wind in a storm, when he came, and his report decided me, so I got out of my berth, and after sundry lurches, succeeded in

Library of Congress

reaching the deck, where, holding on to the door-post, I looked out upon what I had often read of and imagined, "a storm at sea." The foresail had just been blown into tatters, and we were sailing under close-reefed topsails; it was the loss of the foresail which caused her to plunge and reel so awfully, and as they could not for some time bend a new sail, the waves came in across her bows in tons, sweeping everything, not lashed, off the main deck. I held on firmly by the poop-doorway, although drenched with the spray, to take in a full conception of the scene. Oh! it was grand! mighty! terrible! surpassing, infinitely, anything I had ever conceived of its wildest fury! Huge and fantastic mountains of wave, seething and foam-crested, appeared on all sides, raving and rolling impetuously onward. At one moment we were poised on the summit of one of those liquid monsters, from whence their peaks could be seen far as the vision reached, and, anon, we were rushing down—down—into the valley of the sea, with a fearful velocity, as if we were in the basin of a whirlpool; then rose the coming billow, awfully huge and seemingly high as our mast B 5 10 head, threatening instantaneous death, but, just at that moment, when one holds the breath in expectation of being whelmed, the goodly ship rises tremblingly and shivering upon its breast, shaking the disappointed waters in foam from her bows, ere she plunges again down the abyss, to grapple with another liquid monster. I find it impossible to give even a skeleton description of the scene, because I know of no suitable comparison; and one feels how short, infinitely short, the best description, by the greatest minds, falls of that tumultuous reality; and those who speak of storms at sea, being hackneyed and over done, proclaim themselves to be lubbers rather than critics, though they may have braved the dangers of the Channel, or, perhaps, tumbled in the short sea of Biscay.

The grandest description—that which gives a sense of fulness to the mind—is that noble passage in the Psalms of the inspired Hebrew:—

"They that go down to the sea in ships, That do business in great waters, These see the works of the Lord, And his wonders in the great deep. For he commandeth and raiseth The

Library of Congress

stormy wind, Which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, They go down again to the depths, Their soul is melted because of trouble.”

11

Shakspeare has it;—

“The wide and wasteful ocean;”—

Bryant—

“Old ocean's grey, and melancholy waste;”—

Byron—

“—Boundless, endless, and sublime, The Image of eternity.—The throne Of the Invisible;”

all good, beautiful to read in one's study, but, excepting David's, they seem puerile when the memory presents them in the actual scene.

The shrill whistle and shriek of the wind through the shrouds,—the almost human moaning of the strained timbers—the dull solid crash of the breakers upon her bows and side, with the other terrors of the time, made me fancy that our time had indeed come; which fact being settled, the first creeping of the blood disappeared and I felt comparatively calm and observant, for withal I was held by a sort of frightful admiration of the scene. In the midst of the din a hawk or pigeon alighted on our topmost rigging and clung there, the poor thing seemingly worn out, but was shortly after blown away. But out among the foamy crests of the waves swept the hardy gulls, seemingly at home in the storm, and as easy in their movements as if they were perfectly calm. I felt a sort of envious admiration of them as they sailed away, and, had I the power of metamorphosis given me at the time, would undoubtedly have chosen the estate of those aerial fishermen.

Library of Congress

Toward night the violence of the storm increased. I felt so sick from the violent roll of the vessel that I had to get into my berth, from whence I could see over the main cabin, which now presented a strange and pitiful scene. The boxes, barrels, and water-cans, &c., which had: been lashed to the centre stanchions had broken from their lashings, and at every roll of the vessel (which occurred one in three or four minutes), away they went from one side clear to the other, clashing and clattering, and woe to any one unfortunate enough to be caught in one of their charges; the greater part were broken before they were secured. The lamps swung dismally to and fro, only serving to render the confusion visible. The passengers were all sick, and every phase of mortal fright was here exhibited. The women moaning or weeping, the men conjecturing, praying, cursing, or silent from terror. One particularly attracted my attention: he was a small, dry, hard-featured, loquacious Kerry-man, an everlasting politician and polemic ¹³ who always spoke in heroics, and might have been supposed from his fair-weather speeches to be a near relative of Neptune. He had now secured himself firmly to a stanchion under the lamp, and was reading with all his energy, and at the top of his shrill voice the rosary of the blessed Virgin, the rosary of saints, and the rosary of Jesus; the two former three times, for once of the latter, and if one could judge of his faith by the fervour of his appeal for mercy, I should say he believed more in the potency of Mary, Peter, Paul, James, John, Ambrose, &c., than he did in Christ. Another, an Englishman, who had been, up to this, one of the most unreflecting and noisy, full of gibe and levity, was now in the opposite extreme; he wept like a woman, and, by turns, accused his wife violently of having induced him to come. Then, just in the midst of his angry denunciation, a wave would thunder over the deck of the vessel, making her reel again, and his voice would sink into a quavering "Oh! dear. Lord have mercy on us! What shall we do! What shall we do!" Some stayed at the doorway all night thinking (foolish idea!) to take to the boats in case of extremity, but no boat could live ten minutes in that sea. The saloon was turned into a sail ¹⁴ room for convenience. I had made up my mind on going down to lie still in any case, my feeling being, that if she went down, spars or boats were visionary hopes, and that it was a matter of right to meet death decently, and without effeminate uproariousness. As well as I can collect my thoughts at the time, I

Library of Congress

felt a fear and a hope; a fear, from the fact of knowing that the death impending was but the just punishment for my sins, and a hope in Him “whose mercy reacheth to the clouds.” I wished earnestly for the morrow, which was the Sabbath, because on that day I knew that the prayers of the Christian church went up from many a faithful heart for “all those who travel by land or by water.” And amid all the conflict of elements the following couplet of the beautiful and familiar hymn was ever present to my mind,

“God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain.”

Of this peculiarity of the memory, John Locke speaks in his section on “Transferring Thoughts,” he says:—“Thus some trivial sentence or a scrap of poetry will sometimes get into men' s heads, and make such a chiming there, that there is no stilling of it; no peace to be obtained, 15 nor attention to anything else, but this impertinent guest will take up the mind, and possess the thoughts in spite of all endeavours to get rid of it.”

I remember reading in Lady Sale' s “Journal,” that one night before a fatal battle she was haunted as it were with the last verse of Campbell' s “Hohenlinden.”

“Few, few shall part where many meet, The snow shall be their winding sheet, And every turf beneath their feet Will be a soldier' s cemetery,”

which received but too truly a literal fulfilment on the morrow. My chief reflection on the mode of death was, the wholeness of our destruction, not a fragment to tell of our fate; and it came into my mind to place my MSS. in a box that would float, and be perhaps picked up; showing that persons may have greater anxiety for the children of their brain than for their physical safety or life.

June 7th, the Sabbath morning.—Wind as high as yesterday. Felt very ill, and stayed in berth; at noon the wind abated by God' s mercy, and she pitched less violently. The main cabin in a terrible state, the place quite wet from leakage, which, together with the sickness 16 and closed hatches, made the place quite pestiferous; the smell being noxious

Library of Congress

in the extreme. My clothes and those of my berthmate being quite wet, added not a little to our discomfort; yet withal, I slept the first sabbath at sea; may it be the last of such! The general feeling of the passengers was that if once again on *terra firma*, they would never again (as the little Kerry-man expressed it) “be timpted to cross the oshun for the mines of Gaulconda;” felt disposed myself to think that had I known the horrors of the passage I would not have attempted it. How wise is the provision that the future is sealed to man!

June 8th, Monday.—The sea gone down with the wind. A party of the seamen sent below, who thoroughly cleansed the place between decks of the accumulated filth of two days; two more of which would generate plague. Had breakfast with thankfulness and appetite, not having eaten or drunk since Saturday; felt better; kept on deck; nearly all the passengers crept up, looking like spectres. The sun rose. The hatches were opened and all looked bright again; and the laugh and jest at the past fears showed that the lesson had been forgotten.

June 9th, Tuesday.—Drizzling rain all day; 17 water rough; breeze fresh; had to stay below; felt sick; an arrangement made; four men told off for the purpose of cleaning the main cabin daily, to be paid by subscription. Got on deck for a while in the evening and read a little. Made an attempt at toilet; felt pain in the chest from my feet being continually wet.

June 10th, Wednesday,—Wet as yesterday. Had soup for dinner; felt better; read all day; turned in about ten o' clock, was awakened at midnight by the great rocking of the vessel, and a terrible hubbub among the passengers; it was blowing a storm fiercer than that of Saturday. The boxes, barrels, &c., were once again going through succession of charges and counter-charges; a repetition of the old scene With heightened colours. Those who had gone to bed singing and jocose, were now praying lustily. Those who went on deck to report came down with the wildest statements; one had it that the hatches were all fastened down, and that the captain, mates, and crew, had taken to the boats, and gone off; another, that the masts were carried away, and an important leak sprung forward; I

Library of Congress

did not go up, being familiar with the scene, but rolled myself up, and went to sleep with a most diversified chorus. Awoke in 18 the morning with dreadful headache, as during the night, my head had been many times 12 or 18 inches lower than my body; having had breakfast, got gradually better. The wind fell away, and at noon we literally slept upon the water; a slight drizzle of rain, but not a breath of air. At night, singing, dancing, and drinking, in the main cabin, by way of relief to the religious exercises of the previous evening.

June 11th, Friday.—Slept well; after breakfast found a steady wind had set in from E.N.E before which (our yards being squared and all sail set) we sped along like a sea-gull; the advent of the wind was rainy, dull, and cheerless; the sea ran very high, but, owing to a familiarity with the real or supposed danger, and the wind being fair; I enjoyed the scene vastly: it was grand and beautiful, presenting the appearance of a succession of mountain-ridges of molten glass, crowned with snow, over and through which we rode gloriously. By moonlight the scene surpassed description.

June 12th.—Day calm and hazy; ship lying sluggishly on the water; evening winds fresh and cold.

June 13, Sunday.—Calm. Read service. Had collision with mate about a sick sailor. Day 19 fine; cold. Bearings, long. 30° W. lat. 54° N.

June 14, Monday.—Running free S.W. by W., breeze brisk; day hazy; wet; very unpleasant; not able to stay in cabin, so close; nor on deck from the weather. Cannot write my journal for the past three days.

June 15th, Tuesday.—Up at six o' clock. Breakfast seven. Blowing fresh; felt no bad effect from wet bed and blanket; sun up; but air very cold. The first of eleven days pleasant on deck; between decks overhauled. Dried bed and blankets in sun. A sail far to windward; a sail! a sail! remained in sight all day. Sunset surpassing in splendour all the past; the moon nearly or altogether full; a complete lull of the wind, although we made ten knots an hour

Library of Congress

in the early part of the day. Retired at eleven o' clock; about two o' clock was aroused by a squall striking us, which nearly took away our masts; so used to that sort ' of thing now, that I did not go on deck.

June 16th.—Rose at six o' clock. Our consort still in view; wind strong; we lying close to it and taking immense quantities of water over the bows. Weather not so cold as yesterday; drizzly all day. Evening, wind increased very 20 much: reefed topsails and then double-reefed them. Sea running high as on the 7th; the ship rolled fearfully all night, worse than ever, but owing to the familiarity of the thing, had no prayers in the cabin.

June 17th.—Nothing particular, except the sunset, which really seemed like the portals of heaven.

June 18th.—Up at half-past six o' clock; morning fine; wind feeble; came round fair aft for thirty minutes; at half-past nine o' clock, fell away again. A drizzling rain till two o' clock; all sail ordered to be taken in by the skipper for some, cause invisible to a landsman, as the vessel was scarcely moving, the stern lights screwed down, the hatches put on and all made trim for a storm. Heading N.E. No increase of wind; sunset beautiful.

June 19th, Saturday.—Rose at six o' clock; the expected wind has come, and thanks to Providence, in our favour; we went before it with reefed sails at tremendous speed, the sea wild, high, angry-looking and gloomy. Amid the turmoil of waters was to be seen Mother Carey' s chickens-the stormy petrel—the scene such as would immortalise a painter, even to fail in,—our fore-top-sail blown into ribbons.

21

June 20th, Sunday.—Rose at six o' clock. Morning beautiful; steady breeze from the S.W.; at 10 o' clock the wind rose to a gale, with rain; read from the Acts. Day continued stormy and unpleasant. Phosphorescence at night of great brilliancy and beauty.

Library of Congress

June 21st, Monday.—Up at six o' clock. Captain told me we should be in New York on the 29th. Wind cold; temperature within 3° of freezing point. Lat. 44°, long. 49°. The only incident a dance, and row down stairs.

June 22nd, Tuesday.—Up at four o' clock; breakfast at half-past six; head-wind, but not cold; a fog so dense, could not see the ship' s length ahead; a drizzling rain. Two men stationed on the bows as a look-out; had been there all night. A lamp hoisted forward. A fear of icebergs, the epidemic of the day. Passed through a great shoal of porpoise. Found my biscuits much damaged.

June 23rd.—No log.

June 24th.—Rose at six o' clock. Two ships in sight. Sea-weed drifting by. Shore signs. At half-past eight spoke with a British barque; water 40 to 60 fathom deep, wind favourable; speed 9 knots; breeze has been favourable since four o' clock. Tuesday night favourable for observing 22 the stars. Sunset perfectly cloudless, and very beautiful. Long. 54°, lat. 41°.

June 25th.—Overhauled the ship-list, and made out the missing five passengers. Saw a nautilus. Evening foggy; cold, heavy mist; wind dull, and rather ahead.

June 26th.—Was awoke about three o' clock with the stir occasioned by the death of a child in the opposite berth; went asleep again. Awoke at six with bad headache and sore throat. After breakfast assisted the sail-maker in sewing up the body of the little innocent; we put some heavy stones around its tiny limbs, and wrapped it in part of an old sail as a cere. When sewed up, it was carried on deck by one of the seamen and unceremoniously cast off from the lee gang-way, its funeral service being the rough voice of the second mate telling them to "look alive! look alive there, with that child!" it sank amid the foam immediately, down, down to the coral beds of the deep, deep sea. The incident struck me as wanting altogether the solemnity with which my fancy had invested a burial at sea—I

Library of Congress

mean so far as the formality of: interment was concerned. The thing had passed, and was forgotten by all except the mother, with the bubbles of its plunge. The sunset heavenly. Cleared the 23 fog bank which had invested our course, and we now stood in the wide and unbroken plain of the sea; a clear and beautifully clouded sky was spread above us, and the sun, like a mighty mass of molten gold, tinged, as he sank, wave and cloud with unspeakable glories, the latest hues being ever the most beautiful. We swept on with squared yards before a light breeze all night.

June 27th, Saturday.—Still before the wind; cold, severe. A shoal of porpoise passed at eight o'clock. At ten we were passed by a schooner, which seemed a “ship of promise,” as it showed the comparative nearness of land. Read geological treatise; had my bed out of berth, and slept on boxes as an experiment.

June 28th, Sunday.—Rose at six o'clock; will not sleep on boxes again; morning fine; day opened up the finest we had since sailing. Many Black-fish (a species of whale) passed us, one within a few yards of the vessel. It would blow up a column of water every time it rose. Clouds of small birds, like plover, were now in sight, covering miles of the horizon. All passengers dressed clean, and looking well, on deck, temperate in voice and spirit, showing a propriety suitable to a sabbath at sea. Three sail in sight. 24 A sea-hawk passed close to our stern. Read service with two or three others. Caught a breeze at three o'clock; passed several shoal of mackerel, so large, that they darkened the water like a tideway, seemingly acres in breadth, and millions in number; a quantity of sea-birds busy feeding on the moving mass; passed a quantity of dog-fish; refused a bait. The sunset, gorgeous.

June 29th.—Rose at six o'clock; morning cold; the sea a mirror, not a ripple on the wave; the mountainous canvas unable to catch a breath of air. The two sail of the previous evening apparently in the same place and predicament. At seven o'clock a breeze came travelling over the sea, and taking us we moved along at six knots.

Library of Congress

June 30th, Tuesday.—Rose at six o'clock; cold, wind fresh; felt unwell, with sore throat and headache; went to my berth; was awakened at two o'clock by a rush on deck, and a cry of "pilot;" got up, went on deck, and found it raining heavily: but what of that. There out to windward, not a quarter of a mile off, was the pilot, with his blue peter; we hove to, and he stood down upon us; when near enough, a punt was shoved off from him with two rowers, and a man 25 in the stern-sheets; they were shortly alongside, and the next minute a tall, thin, sallow looking man, completely encased in india-rubber, stood upon our poop. His manner was extremely reserved and silent, but seemingly acquainted with his business. Rain blew off in the evening, and the French ship gained on us perceptibly; he had the wind, and came up upon it: but as soon as we felt it, we walked away from him in gallant style; turned in at half-past nine o'clock, and rose at half-past three o'clock.

June 31st, Wednesday.—Blowing a gale, and a-head; light-houses in view; the vessel struggling bravely. Turned in again; and rose at six o'clock; found the high lands plainly visible. The first wonder of the voyage. Two o'clock; still beating, laboriously up the Jersey coast.

Three o'clock; sufficiently near to distinguish the houses and trees; the first impressions of the land of freedom decidedly favourable. Met numbers of outward-bound craft; the water becoming very muddy; passed Sandy Hook, Staten island, and approached the Narrows; from whence the harbour of New York breaks on the view, in all its surpassing beauty. Here we were accosted by a tug-steamer, of peculiar construction, the machinery being above-board, and the C 26 steersman in an office in front, with an awningdeck. After some consultation, he made fast alongside, and we proceeded up the river. On our way, we ran into a quarantine ship, with some three hundred and twenty passengers on board: she had slipped her cable, and was drifting about, the only seamen on board being two, the first mate and a sailor, the remainder having gone ashore, on some law business. The crash was tremendous, her bowsprit passing through our bulwarks amidship, and the spars and rigging becoming foul aloft; the passengers of the other vessel, thinking she was

going down, ran to the side, men and women climbing on the rail, and imploring us to take them in; the distance between the hulls might be 3 feet. We kept them back by voice and hand, as well as we could, there being no danger. One, a fresh, good-looking young girl, fell to my share as an opponent; she was frightened out of her wits, but, by a vociferous, though not very gallant assurance of "No fear! no fear! stop where you are! you can't come here," &c., I kept her in her own vessel. While they were easing off the ships, I asked her the particulars, and found the vessel to be from New Ross Island; that the seamen being badly treated on the voyage, had gone 27 ashore as soon as the anchor dropped, with the exception of one and the mate; that they had been drunk (at least the sailor) for two days, and he was engaged fighting the mate, when we struck the vessel. The man alluded to, now appeared on the main-shrouds, with nothing in the shape of clothing on him, but canvas pantaloons, hitched on to the hips; his face was smeared with blood, which trickled over his body and arms; his hair was streaming wildly about his face, making, altogether, one of the wildest figures I had ever seen; he got up, midway, on the shrouds, and holding on by one arm, shouted, cursed, and swung himself about horribly, giving, at the same time, a detached account of their position, himself, &c., much as follows:—

"Hallo there! haul back the main-yard! Haul taut on the fore-brace; (turning to us). No men aboard, captain, but myself—had no look out—was licking the mate when you came down. All hands ashore, hurrah! I larned him something! Clear away! clear away!"

The unfortunate wretch had a narrow escape from being scraped off from the shrouds by our main-yard when it was righting. Came to an anchor about seven o'clock, opposite Brooklyn, and was struck by the light and gay appearance c2 28 of the ferry-boats that plied on the river, so superior in construction to those used in England, and they appeared crowded with passengers every trip. And now having reached our moorings, we will leave our future experience to another chapter.

Hail Columbia! happy land!— *Song*.

Unquestionably the bay of New York is one of the most beautiful in the world. Those of the Golden Horn, and Honduras, Naples, Dublin, &c., falling second in comparison; the harbour, or inner bay, expands from the Narrows into a basin of twenty-five; miles in circumference, receiving at the west the waters of the Hudson, and those of the east river at the opposite side, a fitting and glorious entrance to that city, which is destined to be the greatest commercial port the world has ever seen. Approaching the city, Staten Island on the left rises up, with its wooded and picturesque high lands studded with goodly mansions and fair cottages, pleasant to the eye; on the other hand, the Long Island coast, stretched finely away, with its wooded heights and wavy outline; to the left of Governor's Island, embedded in a forest of masts, lies the main city; on the left, divided by the noble Hudson, lies Jersey; and on the right, separated by the east river, is Brooklyn, the city of churches, overtopped by its heights of historic interest, which are now crowned with beautiful buildings. At night the harbour seemed like one of those fairs held upon the upper Nile, so filled was it with those beautiful illuminated ferry-boats, that darted incessantly from one point to another, freighted with that citizen whose destiny it would be presumptuous to predicate, but of whom it may be said, as a natural inference, that he will surpass in wealth, empire, and freedom, the Persian, the Roman, and, may I add, the Englishman.

Before going ashore, I would here insert an extract from a descriptive poem (from the part relating to New York), which is at least recommended by accuracy and point.

31

“Again I'm off into a disquisition, Leaving untouch'd the burden of my theme, Sometimes I find my Muse hath disposition To prate of matters which can scarcely seem Within the province of an Exposition, Such as the present, which I rather deem An illustrated guide-book, to avail Your memory, should you ever strike my trail.

Library of Congress

“You've seen, perhaps, the famous Golden Horn, The famed, but sometimes misty, Bay of Naples, Honduras, Rio, or, on a fair June morn, The beauteous Cove? these are the general staples Of tourists' merchandise. I therefore warn Your travell'd eye to note the spires and gables, The shipping forest, Brooklyn, and the Battery, Then say your thoughts of New York, without flattery.

“I have presumed you enter from the Bay, And from the Narrows viewed that noble harbour, Marked Staten Island, as it smiling lay, Its heights and coves begemmed with many an arbour For quiet love, o'erlooking the wide sea— Fortress, where Cupid seldom dons his armour, Yet I have seen, sometimes, a paradise Containing hearts as false as loaded dice.

“The wooded heights of fair Long Island shore, And Jersey bounding on the other side, The one resounding back th' Atlantic's roar, The other answering to the Hudson's tide, While fenced with masts (but that I've said before) Lies fair Manhattan, like a blushing bride, Meeting her lord. To carry out this notion, Fancy she, à-la-Venice, weds the ocean.

32

“When having seen all this, you must pronounce That Bay the fairest on the fair green globe, Else, all your claims to judgment, I denounce, And forthwith would apply a caustic probe To cauterise your prejudice, and pounce Upon your sacred idols; for, not Job Could bear some Cockneys' jaundiced thought, which As, for example, those vile “Notes” by Dickens.

New York surpassed, from the water, anything I had conceived of it, but, like Naples, the beauty was lost somewhat on landing, the streets near the quay being tortuous, narrow, badly paved, and unclean; and the fashion of having heavy awning-posts raised from the sidewalk takes much from the appearance, whatever they may add to the comfort; however, on entering the heart and upper parts of the city, a favourable impression returned. Many of the streets have trees planted along the sidewalk, giving them a *rus*

Library of Congress

in urbe appearance, which is very pleasing, and that which gives such a charm to some of the Parisian *rues*. The public parks are numerous though small, and are embellished with fountains, which are supplied plentifully with water. Indeed, New York is perhaps the best watered city in the world. In the summer evenings you may see, almost 33 opposite every house, a small hose, with which a boy is watering the street, sidewalk, and housefront), the descent of the Croton to the city being considerable,) making a very good *jet d' eau*. The public buildings are elegant or massive. Among the former style may be mentioned Trinity and Grace Churches. Among the latter, the Customs House, and Merchants' Exchange. One of the first things striking a stranger's eye is that the people, as a mass, are well dressed, and the energy, or "goa-head-ativeness," of the male portion. And one is surprised at the seeming universality of newspaper literature. Men, women, boys, and girls, read the newspaper; nor is it an uncommon event, when any stirring news is in the market, to strike off six extra editions of a paper in the day. The style of the writing is light, the heavier matter emanating from the scissors rather than the pen; yet at times there is the reflex of strong and clear minds disseminated to the public at two cents per sheet. Next come the people, let us see them; one feels so anxious at the "monarchs" at home,—the far-famed Jonathan—he of reform—the rifle—and republic,—the cool, c 5 34 shrewd, vigorous, large-souled, indomitable citizen! He that is so criticised, admired, and feared by all classes in Europe; well, here they are, the real living Yankees at home. And business,—and, as to houses of business, let me say, that he who walks along Broadway, may see one of the finest trading establishments in the world, a literal marble palace, devoted to commerce; and if he turns into the lower part of the city, where the wholesale merchants "most do congregate," he will conclude that London has a rival, and will, within a century, have a superior; and one looking on this great city and people, is prompted to pause and analyse the peculiarities of mind that compose the American. Vieing with the Parisian in dress—the Englishman in energy—cautious as a Dutchman—impulsive as an Irish-man—patriotic as Tell—brave as Wallace—cool as Wellington—and royal as Alexander; there he goes—the American citizen! In answering your questions, or speaking commonly, his style is that of the ancient Spartan; but put him on a stump,

Library of Congress

with an audience of whigs, democrats, or barn-burners, and he becomes a compound of 35 Tom Cribb and Demosthenes, a fountain of eloquence, passion, sentiment, sarcasm, logic, and drollery, altogether different from anything known or imagined in the Old World states. Say anything of anybody (as public men) untied with conventional phraseology, he swings his rhetorical mace with a vigorous arm, crushing the antagonistic principle or person, into a most villanous compound. See him at dinner, he despatches his meal with a speed which leads you to suppose him a ruminating animal, yet enjoying his cigarro for an hour afterwards, with the gusto and *ennui* of a Spaniard.

Walking right on, as if it were life against time, with the glass at fever-heat, yet taking it cool in the most serious and pressing matter, a compound of the Red Man, Brummel, and Franklin,—statesman and labourer, on he goes,—divided and subdivided in politics and religion,—professionally opposed with a keenness of competition in vain looked for even in England; yet, let but the national rights or liberty be threatened, and that vast nation stands a pyramid of resolve, united as one man, with heart, head, hand, and purse, 36 burning with a Roman zeal to defend inviolate the cause of the commonwealth.

To him who has lived among the Americans, and looked largely at the theory and practice of their government and its executive, there remains no possible doubt that the greatest amount of personal security and freedom has been produced from the least amount of cost of any nation in the world. Culling its principles and wisdom from the history of all empires, it stands the nearest of all earthly systems to perfection, because it is built on, and embodies those principles which God hath proclaimed in his attributes. And the prayer of all men should be, that the day may never come when those immutable maxims will be tainted by vanity or corrupted by wealth.

Preserved in the purity which has been covenanted for by the blood of good and brave men, what a glorious destiny appears in the future history of this the youngest, yet among the greatest of earth's empires,—a destiny which shall swallow in its brightness the paling

Library of Congress

lights of the elder world. As a reflex of those feelings 37 I subscribe some verses, written on Staten Island, when leaving the United States in 1849.

Fare thee well, fair land of freedom Home of freemen, fare thee well! Once more, adieu! before thou sinkest, 'Neath the heaving ocean's swell.

Once again, the last, farewell! My soul in fondness wafts to thee, Thou rest for pilgrims, home for all, Land of glorious destiny.

Stainless be thy starry banner, Ever glorious be thy name, A meteor, to unborn millions, Be thy spangled roll of fame.

Lighting up, a range of ages, To the distant bounds of time, Marking thee, amid the nations, Chiefest—grandest—most sublime!

In the busy tide of humanity, that flows along Broadway, may be seen representatives of every clime, to which civilization has borne record of the promised land, Chinese and Mexican, Brazilian and Dane.

The fire-brigades well deserve notice; they are numerous and well-appointed, many of the engines being extremely beautiful, mounted with 38 silver, and of the most elaborate workmanship but the most extraordinary part of the matter is, that the companies are composed of citizens, who receive no stipendiary reward. In the tower of the City Hall, a perpetual watch is kept night and day, with telescope and map of the city. As soon as a fire is observed, the watchman strikes on a powerful bell the number of the ward in which it is. In five minutes from the first tap the various brigades are flying over the streets like a park of artillery, every thing and person making way for the engine, Each machine has from thirty to fifty men, some eighty; and the heroism and generous emulation in labour and danger displayed by them in action it is difficult to match, and impossible to surpass. Nor are the dangers and labours few, as I have known as many as five fires of a night in the city, to many of which the run would be a mile or upwards for some of the engines.

Library of Congress

The hotels are numerous, magnificent, and economical, as a stay at the Astor or Irving houses will demonstrate. The former is said to be capable of accommodating one thousand persons. 39 And as to boarding-houses they are innumerable, from the 2½ dollars per week mechanics' home, to the 16 dollars elegant and select uptown palace. The system of boarding out is universal. Young men and women, married and single, all board out; which system, though it may have less care to recommend it, is certainly devoid of that comfort and permanency which belongs to a home; hence the Americans are so migratory and unsettled in their residence. To move implies no more than paying your bill, and calling a cab; which moving mania nevertheless extends even to the owners of the boarding-houses, which may be seen on the 1st of May in any year, when the whole city seems to be making an exodus.

The hospitality of the Americans is unequivocal, which fact I infer from my reception on producing my letters of introduction. There is not, however, that exquisite enjoyment of social intercourse which may be enjoyed in the older countries, as the feelings and passions of the people seemed to be tinged with the same curtness of indulgence which characterises their general 40 manners. Fast, seems the talismanic word. They eat, drink, work, speak, walk, and think, fast. Their visits are short, so are their sermons. Their parties might be considered dull and formal, if their manners be not considered; they do not show their emotions though they feel strongly. And though luxurious as the Sybarite, are silent as the Spartan.

If I were to specify what I considered a want in this republican city it would be public baths and public libraries, and gymnasia, when the young men would be less seen in those Circean saloons, where sherry-cobblers, oysters, and regalias now attract them; and be more 'worthy and efficient members to preserve or defend the integrity of the empire. It should not be forgotten that the veterans of Hannibal, who had cut their way through the legions of Rome, and surmounted the frowning barrier of the Alpine range, sank before the luxurious effeminacy of Capua.

CHAPTER III. THE HUDSON.

“But leave we critic thoughts, and shape our way Up the majestic Hudson's beauteous stream.”

One of the peculiar differences that strike the traveller's eye in the New World is the vastness with which Nature displays herself,—there is a gigantic grandeur in all that meets the vision, which fact has, I doubt not, contributed much to: imbue the American mind with those comprehensive ideas and words at which *Islanders* cavil as egotism or bombast—but we cannot lose sight of the fact that our physical nature is considerably acted on by the locality of our birth and residence; nor is our mind free from the influences of climate and association, for let twins be raised, one on the mountains of Switzerland, the other on the plains of Holland, 42 and the men will differ world wide in mind and body: hence it is not to be expected that a man dwelling in a densely populated island, such as Britain, could expand his mind to the capacity of recognising as natural the large spoken American, because the mind of such a man, from the first exercise of its powers, judged of and looked at all things with the contracted circumscribed vision of an insular judgment, and has conscientiously settled down into the conviction that any circle of thought, speech, or action, larger than its own, is bombast or speculation, proving that the Gulliver of Jonathan Swift was not a pasquinade on his own times alone, but fits the phlegmatic and conservative John Bull as happily now as in the eighteenth century.

The rivers, mountains, lakes, forests, and prairies of America, all bear the stamp of vastness; and this largeness is reflected in the minds of her citizens; hence by the senator of the States—to the merchant—the landowner and artizan—projects are propounded and carried out which would in England be hooted down in the proposal as Utopian. The ventures would be 43 called ruinous speculations—modes of operation that would be termed fantastic, and manners and habits that would be coerced as subversive of law and order, are here severally but the spontaneous workings of a larger mind more favourably

Library of Congress

located, and acting harmoniously for the general good. Fancy the worshipful member of King's Inns supposing that a bench could be filled without ermine and horse-hair—a plainly dressed man a profound jurist—the barrister undistinguished from their clients in dress, or privilege of place—a learned member of the bar with his feet as high as his head, or a shoemaker going up to ask his lordship a question, and law to exist in connection with such barbarism—no, no, you cannot expect them to believe that law, learning, and equity, can be administered or display itself without curled wigs, mohair robes, policemen, and privilege. It is no use saying they don't believe those essential, else why not abolish the old womanish baboonery, which would be tolerable only in the Middle Ages, and is truly a barbarism in our day and generation. As an evidence of how little even the wisest men of Britain have been acquainted with America, there is a ludicrous but historical proof in an incident of the war between the two countries, when, by an Order in Council several hundred barrels were sent *out* to supply the fleet with fresh water, which said fleet was then riding on Lake Michigan. Nor is the national ignorance confined either to the senate, or to past times, for daily evidences occur showing the same error of estimate, which even the Collins steamers or California have failed to enlighten. The fact is (commercial men excepted) John Bull is unable to see through the now doubtful glory of his wooden walls.

Of the many rivers that water this immense continent there is none that can be said to surpass in scenic beauty the Hudson. I have sailed upon it many times by day and night; and at each succeeding trip it displayed new points of beauty to the eye. Rising in the country west of Lake George, it flows through a succession of delightful scenery until, a short distance above Troy, it weds the beautiful Mohawk, which, having flowed with growing volume through that sweet valley to which the Red Man so tenaciously clung, springs 45 down at Cohoes in a cascade of much grandeur (the effect of which is much heightened by the wildness of the scenery, and the solitude of the place), and flows joyously into the embraces of the Hudson. The confluent waters stretch away in a depth capable of bearing steam-boats past Troy, Albany, Hudson, &c., reflecting in its spreading waters many towns of rapid growth and increasing importance.

Library of Congress

Before we proceed up stream let us pause to examine the mode of conveyance. One of the world-famed American river steamers, which even Mrs. Trollope could not find fault with, and which every honest traveller must pronounce superior to anything of the kind in any part of the world, not excepting her Majesty's yacht. Before us at her wharf lies the "New World," built at a cost of 186,000 dollars, capable of accommodating 2,000 passengers. Her length 386½ feet; extreme breadth 74 feet; diameter of her wheel 46 feet; length of piston 15 feet; diameter of cylinder 78 inches. This is the skeleton description of her size and capacity, the details of accommodation and arrangement I will not attempt to detail, as 46 it would require a very full chapter to do it justice. We must be content with saying that the stem of the main-deck is portioned off into a saloon of a richness truly Eastern, recalling the apartments of Haroun al Raschid, which we were familiar with in our boyish reading. All that gilding, velvet, damask, marble, mahogany, and mirrors can do is here effected. At the further end is another saloon compartmented off, exclusively for the ladies, surpassing the general saloon in costliness and beauty; and when sprinkled with beautiful women, elegantly dressed, one feels inclined to think that had that shrewd and imaginative Arab ever been on the Hudson boat we might have been able to trace the idea of Mohammed's Houris and Paradise to a view of the ladies' saloon; and certainly the real scene I fancied to surpass even his luxurious details of gigantic pearls, ladies of musk, white winged camels, &c.

Forward the deck is furnished with wash-rooms, baggage-rooms, captain's office, &c., and the engineers' (office I will call it) where the beautiful and powerful machinery may be seen working in its exquisite order, which is not the least attractive 47 part of the boat. Ascending you reach the promenade-deck running flush nearly the whole length of the boat, where you can enjoy the scenery, a fresh breeze, and long walk, protected from sun and weather by an awning-roof. The promenade-deck is furnished with every description of seat: below the main-saloon is the dining-hall, where you can procure meals as richly served and good as at any hotel in the city, so that in fact once fairly on board, except that you are undeceived by the change of scenery, you could fancy yourself rather in a first-

Library of Congress

class hotel than on a steam-boat; nor will your imagination be hindered in the comparison if you have ever run down the Thames, or been churned in the Channel packets from Boulogne to Dover, or Liverpool to Kingstown.

I do not know of many better fields for observation than an up-stream boat; you will find the passengers comprised of men from every civilized point of the globe. The vivacious native of Gaul, full of courtesy and information; the Prussian-German, intellectual but dreamy; the Dutchman, slow, cautious, and pipe-loving; the Englishman, 48 brusque, egotistic, and comparative; the shrewd Scot; the hopeful Irishman; Chinese, Greek, Swede, &c., mixing, according to their taste, in the habits and conversation of their fellow-passengers; here you may also see the different phases of the American. That dark-featured aristocratic man, with ponderous chain and jewelled fingers, is a southern, going with his beautiful wife to scatter his gold at the springs; and that thin gentleman, dressed all in black, with the quick eye and nasal pronunciation, is a “down-easter,” regaling a select few with the marvellous advantages of some “fixin’,” of which he wants to sell or “trade” the patent right; and he, the strongly built man, with a certain largeness about his face, dress, manner, &c., discussing the character of Daniel Webster, he is a western merchant, who has been east to buy his goods. But let us walk into the saloon, and look round, and here may be seen the votaries of the blind god, to whom river, mountain, and crowd, are as things unreal, so full of each other is lip and eye, and truly the much lauded “language of flowers” fades into insignificance,—giving a facility to courtship,—when it 49 is compared to those serpentine sofas where the parties are *vis-à-vis* and eye to eye. Verily the Yankees are an ingenious people, and this “sparking sofa” is their *chef d’œuvre*. But a truce to this gossip; let us return to the promenade-deck, and look on the beauties of the river.

Leaving New York, as you proceed up-stream due north, on the western side of the river rises the Palisades, stretching some twenty miles, formed of a perpendicular wall of rock, seemingly varying from 100 to 250 feet high, but from the distance which the width of the river intervened, I could not judge of their formation; they form a grand study to the artist, and an interesting one to the geologist. On the eastern shore may be seen many beautiful

Library of Congress

mansions dotting the picturesque sites which the banks afford in abundance. There is a disposition to overlook much of the beauties which this river presents, in anticipation of the Highlands, which are stupendous. Here the river is narrowed to a deeper channel, and the mountains close in and nod above the flood with sublime effect, perhaps more so than even at Harper's Ferry, in Virginia, where D 50 the Potomac and Shenandoah burst through the Blue Mountains, rendering that wild and awful pass, of which Jefferson truly said that, "to see it were worth a voyage across the Atlantic." At either side, for seemingly a thousand feet, they tower up, wooded, to the summit, the glorious preachers of Omnipotence, evoking from the beholder, if he be not altogether earthy, a tribute of praise to Him who causeth the great rivers to flow, and hath piled up the mountains of the earth in grandeur.

At West Point is the fortress which the ever-to-be-despised Arnold stipulated to surrender to the enemies of his country and of liberty; that traitor, with whose memory should ever be coupled a regret that from the highest peak of the pass there swings no gibbet encasing the bleaching skeleton of so base a knave; yet, though it is to be regretted that this warning to traitors is not there, still there is there a monument to call forth the emulation of patriots, to enkindle in the soul an honour for the great and good, to sanctify the place to liberty and valour, and proclaim to all who pass, that there stands an invocation to freedom, 51 in the cenotaph of Kosciusko, raised by the students of West Point; it speaks the reverence and devotion with which they hold the memory of the hero and the man, and gives an assurance to their country, that should an occasion arise they may be relied on with faith and hope of defending his principles and emulating his virtues. Some miles lower down is Tappan Bay, a beautiful sheet of water, where it was that the brave but fated André was captured on his return, from the interview with Arnold, to the British lines. Britain has a monument to his memory, and at her hand it is due; on her behalf he undertook the important office of a spy, and paid the price of failure with his blood. And of none among her millions should Columbia be more proud than of those three virtuous citizens whose honour and patriotism wavered not in the hour of strong temptation, whom

Library of Congress

neither the gold, promises, threats, nor entreaties of André could purchase or corrupt,—I mean those true men Vanwart, Paulding, and Williams.

At Newberry may be seen the house occupied D 2 52 by that great man General Washington during the Revolutionary war.

From Katskill landing there is a view of the mountains bearing that name; upon the crest of the highest point is the Katskill House, elevated at about 2000 feet, a comfortable and well appointed hotel, from the piazza of which may be had perhaps one of the finest views in the world, not excepting Chamouny, or the valley of Damascus. For sixty miles the beautiful Hudson winds under the eye, dotted with innumerable schooners, and many steamboats, and adorned with islands which look like so many floating gardens. In the valley repose numerous villages, farm-houses, and richly-cultivated farms, making an immediate panorama of exquisite rural beauty, which is contrasted with the dark forests to the west; while away on the other hand the prospect is bounded by the noble mountains of Connecticut, Vermont, and Massachusetts.

As a close to this chapter, I would subjoin an extract from the poem from which I have before borrowed, and for the same reasons:—

53

But leave we critic thoughts, and shape our way Up the majestic Hudson's mighty stream.
Past the huge palisades, piled up for aye By Nature's hand, so wall-like that you'd deem
The mind of man did their foundations lay— So huge they rise, the fishers' houses seem
No larger than a dove-cote, and the fisherman, At their great base, seems dwindled to a span.

At either side, in majesty arise, Bold hilly banks, well-wooded to the crown; While, in the west, the Katskill pierce the skies In glorious dignity.—Anon, you see a town, Nestling in

Library of Congress

some fair cove, while past you flies A floating palace—bearing swiftly down A thousand human souls to that great mart, Which is the empire's centre, head, and heart.

But now, we enter that vast mountain pass, Through which the stately river takes its way. Up to the heavens—great bulwarks—mass on mass Are piled in mighty grandeur, and display The Eternal's power: man feels himself but grass, In presence of those peaks, that look today As they have done in ages long gone by! Such thoughts are wholesome, though they cause a sigh.

Let those who have not seen the Hudson, say The Rhine is fairest of all famous rivers— Speak of the Nile, as mighty; or display The charms of Seine, or Thames, or Guadalquivir; Or, in prose poetic, or prosaic lay, Or, in sententious folios deliver Their thoughts on Euphrates, or Hoang Ho; But, had they seen the Hudson, they would know

54

The difference, and be filled with more delight; The only fault being that the thing was Yankee. Let them pass through the Highlands by moonlight, Leaving their wonder and their conscience free, And I will stake my judgment I am right In thinking they will not henceforward be So prone to quote the Danube, or old Nilus, As travellers sometimes do until they *rile* us.

55

CHAPTER IV. A FIRE—AND “THE FALLS.”

“Hark! the bell—one, two, three! Strikes the larum of fire, And the wild sound is echo'd From belfry and spire. From his slumbers the fireman springs forth at the knell, Hurrah! here they come! at the sound of the hell. See! the smoke like a demon, ascends on the wind, And the quivering flame-tongues are hissing Behind, How it pours through the casement a fierce lurid tide, And the fire-fiend hisses—and roars in his pride.”

Library of Congress

Hail! monarch of the world of floods, whose majesty and might, First dazzles, then enraptures, then o'erawes, the aching sight. The pomp of kings and emperors, in every clime and zone, Grows dim before the splendour of thy glorious watery throne. Buckingham.

In a former chapter allusion was made to the fire-companies; and I may be pardoned for here introducing a more detailed account of them. They are usually composed of young men from fifteen to twenty-five or thirty (I speak from 56 observation—not enquiry). The engines and hose are kept with the most scrupulous care; and a generous emulation exists between the companies as to appearance and effectiveness. The consequence is, as soon as the fire-bell strikes, the number of the ward in which the danger exists, the members of the companies (no matter how they may be at the moment employed) rush to the station-house, and thence sweep through the streets like a cavalry charge, headed by their hose captains, trumpet in hand; if at night, torch-bearers are in the van—some of the torches being enclosed in large lamps of variegated glass. The scene becomes one of excitement when two companies emerge in a common street and strain every nerve to reach the fire first. The engines are mounted on light high-wheeled carriages, and are of various construction: some are forced by the up and down pressure—others by the horizontal: when the workers sit down and pull as if rowing a barge. They are beautifully painted and ornamented in silver, and many have a range of bells attached to the hose-cart, which ring as they go. From the front of the engine carriage-frame 57 runs out some thirty or forty yards, or more, of strong rope, of which the members take each a hold and off they start at top of their speed: the guidance being performed by two strong men who stay by the pole. Everything gives place to the engine as if it were a locomotive; and no wonder, for even a heavy “buss” would come off second best by odds. In the event of collision it sometimes occurs that one of the runners fall: when, if he does not hold on to the rope he is almost sure to be crushed.

Library of Congress

Each company is dressed in uniform, differing in some particular. The general dress consists of helmet-shaped strong-glazed hats with wide leaf, waterproof boots and scarlet kirtle, with wide patent leather waist-belt. There are also “hook and ladder” companies for scaling to rescue life, or pulling down to intercept the progress of a conflagration. The devoted heroism of the firemen is truly great; with an utter forgetfulness of self, they brave the most imminent dangers at the call of philanthropy, and not unfrequently some brave fellow is crushed or burned to death—and that which would have immortalized him with D 5 58 “old Homer,” is looked on or read of next day, as a mere act of good citizenship.

The fires in America are more numerous, rapid, and destructive than in Europe. Incendiarism is frequent: the vast quantity of wooden buildings scattered still through cities, and preponderating in smaller towns, and the dryness of the atmosphere combine to account for this. Being present at the great fire at Albany in 1848, I will subscribe a sketch of it as a good sample of some “tall burning:” it occurred in August, when the heat was very great (98 in the shade), and there having been no rain for some fourteen days previous to the fire, everything was dry as tinder under such a sun. I had gone to dinner to my boarding-house, which was situated in the upper part of the town, when the bells rang an alarm; but this being a common occurrence I did not mind it. After dinner (that is in about half an hour) as the bells still continued to ring, I walked down to the southern part of the town, and found the scene truly awful: though not quite an hour since it commenced, a whole block— *i.e* the section of a street, lying between two intersecting streets, 59 was wrapped in flames; and also the front of the block on the opposite side of the street. Heaps of furniture lay piled about, and the anxious and busy crowd rushed hither and thither to save some property or person. Some of the rescued sufferers were being borne to the hospital, one of whom—an old man—was the most pitiable object I ever saw: he had been literally roasted alive—his skin presenting the appearance of shrivelled parchment; and yet, though conscious, and certainly in agony, no. plaint or moan came from his scorched lips. Hurrying men and distracted women rushed about, bearing off the things most dear to them; and, in their selections, it was strange to see the different manifestations of

Library of Congress

mind. Here, a young girl fled through the crowd, guarding carefully a delicate flower in full blossom. There went another clasping a child to her bosom; and, again, one with a small dog and a bird-cage. Here came a man whose store had just caught the flames, giving him time only to sweep all his money in notes, gold and silver, into a bucket which he now carried on his arm, and walked away no more seemingly discomposed than if no such serious calamity had befallen him. This is a striking trait in the American character, to “try again”—there is not that despairing suicidal tendency which has been remarked to prevail in the event of great losses, or a sudden reverse of fortune, in the old countries, especially in England. Let the thorough Yankee be worth a million of dollars today—he burns up—the insurance “bursts up,” and he is a pauper tomorrow. Well, he guesses it can't be helped; and starts again, commencing life as energetically and hopeful as in the beginning of his career, though time may have placed twenty years against him in life's account since that time.

Within four hours, some six acres of the town had been thoroughly burned; and, to all human appearance, the destruction of the entire city seemed inevitable. The utmost endeavours of the fire-companies were useless against such a body of fire and a brisk wind. Houses in the path of the flame were mined and blown up, but to no purpose. Great masses of burning wood floated like feathers in the air, and houses took fire half a mile off from those flakes. I got out upon the roof of a house in the upper part of the town, and looked down upon that sea of fire; and truly it was awful. The docks, boats and shipping, ware-houses, &c. in the lower part of the city were one swaying and quivering mass of flame. Up into the heavens a cloud of lurid smoke and burning embers arose as if out of the crater of a volcano, releasing that terrible view which Lot had when, looking from Zoar, he saw the smoke of the country of the plain go up, like the smoke of a furnace. On it went roaring, crackling and devouring: the fire was at its height, and all seemed lost; when lo! at once, the upper region of the smoke-pillar quivered and wreathed in huge snake-like wreaths, then swayed backward. The wind was changed, the big rain fell in torrents, the raging fire was beaten back over the scene of its triumph; and within an hour, not a

Library of Congress

flame-tongue was to be seen: it was a waste of drenched embers. The city was saved. Never have I seen a more evident and merciful manifestation of Him, "Whose way is in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."

That night, beneath a dear moon, I walked 62 through the ruins—a black and smoking mound—where in the morning had stood happy homes, and busy marts. I walked through the same section in six months after—and lo! it stood (a commentary on the vitality and resources of the people) rebuilt and reinhabited, full of life, bustle, and commerce, as if no such calamity had ever occurred; and many referred to the event as one of great ultimate benefit, inasmuch as the new buildings were better and larger, and the streets wider and more improved.

Truly the Americans are the most progressive branch of the human family that we have any record of; and they who doubt this are those who have not had an opportunity or desire to judge them aright; but let it not be concluded, that this conviction arose from that single fact of Albany rebuilt, it was rather the restoration of an opinion formed from a thousand data, and a wide observation.

I proceeded from Albany up the beautiful valley of the Mohawk as far as Lockport by the Erie Canal. The mode of conveyance is twofold—by the packet, and the liner: the former exclusively 63 for passengers and light freight, the latter for general freight and emigrants, or other passengers. I tried both, and herewith is my experience.

The packet takes twice as many passengers—goes twice as quick—charges twice as much—and is twice better than the liner. It is drawn by three horses, which have the knack of keeping all the time in a trot, and doing four miles an hour nevertheless. The interior consists of one long cabin, with the forward portion screened off for the ladies. The charges, which are very low (only, I think, three cents a mile), include board. In the liner the centre part of the boat is devoted to merchandise, the forward cabin is for sitting in, and the stern one for dining; the deck is flush, and for the artist who wishes to sketch, the

Library of Congress

liner is better than the packet, the speed being only about two miles an hour, or perhaps three, so that you can go on shore, make a short pedestrian excursion, and overtake your boat at the next lock.

At night the cabin (which by a judicious knowledge of the effect of proportion in the furniture, 64 the artistic upholsterer has succeeded in producing the illusion that six persons might comfortably sit, lounge or stand up in it) presents a strange appearance to the novice. At each side appears six frames about twenty-four inches wide, one side hooked on to the side of the boat, the other suspended by a suspiciously small-looking cord to the roof. The space between those sleeping shelves is about two feet, and you feel a certain wish for the top berth in case of an accident; but then remembering that hot air ascends, and ventilation not being provided for, philosophy overcomes fear, and you take the lower berth, taking off your hat, coat, and sometimes your boots, you turn on, I could not say in, as the imitation of covering would not justify the most poetic imagination in comparing it to a bed. By and by a young Hercules, who is going out west to chop, and who has been trying for his private amusement during the last half hour to master the double-shuffle and “breakdown” dances overhead, comes down, and unfortunately recognising you, “guesses,” as in sheer friendliness, that “he’ll sleep thar,” pointing to the shelf which 65 overhangs your devoted head, and proceeds forthwith to convey his proportions to it, cowhide-boots included. You remember that he mentioned his weight as one hundred and seventy pounds, and very much taxed is your faith in that hempen cord; and as the hitherto plain surface of your canvas ceiling becomes threateningly convex, every creak of the said frame-hammock begets a fear,—gradually, however, you sleep, and dream of the voluptuous monarch, and the suspended sword.

I should not omit to mention another advantage of this mode of travel, *viz.* the exercise which one gets in posturing, so much so that you commence at Albany as stiff as a grenadier, and some out at Buffalo flexible as a harlequin; but for the enjoyment of this the passenger packet is to be preferred. Let me illustrate for a moment. The canal is. crossed by innumerable bridges, not arched but parallel: some of which are within four, three, and

Library of Congress

even two feet of the deck. Well, of course you are on deck, viewing the really beautiful scenery, when your reverie, if not your head, is broken by a call from the steersman, 66 of "Bridge." At this cry collision is avoided by stooping down after the Chinese method of salutation *à la mandarin*. But, if the call is, "Low Bridge," the Hindoo method of worship, or Indian crawl, rapidly performed, will alone save your hat and head. In some cases a complete prostration on your back is desirable, when you can observe the heavy beams glide past within twelve inches of your nose. In this case one concludes that a mortal of the Falstaff make at one side of a bridge, may be a spare Cassius at the other,—however, after you have had a knock down you become quick-sighted enough, and enjoy the joke very much. It happens occasionally that persons are killed and drowned by this low-bridge system, but then they were inattentive.

So much for the conveyance, now for the conveyed, stopping at every town I changed boats often, and consequently my company; and various were the *compagnons de voyage* of my route. Now a party of Canadian French Indians, with their chief. Again, a boat full of emigrants going west, with some of their golden visions dispelled; 67 and, again, a cabin full of contrasted manners and nations.

As a little episode I will take an incident on one of the liners, when our cabin contained two sisters—one a widow, the other an old maid, of sharp features and sharper wit—a New York pedlar, and his partner,—a South Carolinian, black-haired, black-eyed, quick, egotistic and boisterous—another man, a Pennsylvanian, well-featured, quiet, reflective, and quaint in expression: he was a mechanic; had lost his wife two years before; gave up house, and was now a wanderer, he cared not whither, he had spent all his money, and meant to get out at the next town, and go to work—complained of dyspepsia, and looked sickly. The particulars of his life he furnished unsolicited.

The day being unfavourable for deck we kept below, and between the pedlar and dyspeptic the conversation commenced, then extended, and finally became general. I, of course, falling in, but one-of the ladies quickly falling out with the pedlar, because of his

Library of Congress

heterodoxy in doubting the use of brimstone in the punishment of souls. 68 Coming to the rescue of the lady, I found him well versed in the use of Universalist weapons, making as much as could be of that popular but shallow creed, but unable to extricate himself from the absurdities which I led him into by the Socratic method of question, by which it was easy to make him prove too much. He was generally though not critically read; had been educated a strict Presbyterian, but, when arrived at age and New York, took revenge on the strict rule which the Puritan tenets had held on him by jumping to the other extreme, and embracing that doctrine of licence which may be considered as an exposition of the creed of Sardinapalus.:

“From grave to gay ” our subject turned, and, among other things, the New Yorker proposed that, our captain being an esquire, and the other requisite of ladies and bachelors being on hand, a marriage would be an excellent way of passing the time (marriage solemnized by a magistrate, lawyer, judge, minister, or doctor is legal); I entered into the spirit of the joke, as also the Carolinian—the parties in prospect being the dyspeptic widower and the spinster, who was 69 quite juvenile at the idea. But judge our astonishment when the gentleman took it in earnest, and the Carolinian prompted him quite seriously, merely (as he said aside to me) that I might see a speedy marriage, such being no uncommon occurrence—reminding me of the obliging Tipperary host, who ordered his servant to shoot an old woman for the purpose of gratifying his Saxon visitor with the view of an Irish wake. The invalid now arranged his hair, put on the agreeable, and “went a sparking,” as he termed a removal of his seat next to the blushing fair and here for the first time did I hear that much talked-of nerve-undoing desperate affair—popping the question. He began serious as a judge's charge by saying that, “beginning in jest, he had on reflection thought seriously of the matter—had found in the loss of one wife the value of another—that his attentive observation and attention to her sentiments, even on so limited an acquaintance, convinced him that she was a woman to make his life happy; in proof of which, he would there and then marry her, if she would only say yes.”

Library of Congress

The lady did not faint or scream, but rather metaphysically replied that “appearance in women on a limited acquaintance was no sure method of judgment, and thought it a matter of prudence that the gentleman should reflect more, else his Elysium might be less true in fact than fancy.”

Our hero rejoined “that such delay was unnecessary, he was prepared to abide by the result of his observation,” and again urged a consent.

At this point the Yorker went on deck and I followed him; he went for the purpose of apprising the captain that we were to have a marriage on board after supper.

The captain, an old man, said “he was ready to officiate when called on.”

I remarked to the Yorker “how well the Romeo acted.”

“Not at all,” said he; “he's serious as death—they are a capital match—we'll have them buckled within an hour.”

When I found that the joke was likely to become a job, I felt like one who had counselled suicide, and straightway set about averting the catastrophe. On going down I found the lady in 71 tears, and feared I was too late, but finding my dyspeptic friend still pleading, I put in my oar, calling up the valuable assistance of the widow-sister. I remarked, “that I concurred fully in the wisdom of the lady's remark—that in matters of such moment it was not well to rely on impulsive determinations,” referring to the widow as umpire.

Fortunately, she had been wooed for three years, and held that that period was the orthodox time, under which it would be impossible to make a sound selection.

The Yorker was a strong opponent, but we beat him gallantly, and had the satisfaction of winning a “no,” from the “fayr ladle.”

Library of Congress

The philosophic dyspeptic, after the verdict had been rendered, took any speculative clue that was given him to any of his many strange questions; and that night I slept with a clear conscience, satisfied in having prevented the addition of one to the catalogue of hasty marriages.

From Lockport, I proceeded to the village of the Falls, by a most dangerous railway. Before we had gone half-way, we ran off, and had to turn out *en masse* and prize on the carriage. On arriving at the suspension bridge I caught a first view of the "Falls," distant about a mile, and never experienced the sense of disappointment so keenly, the cataract seeming infinitely below that which my imagination had been forming since boyhood. I had likewise been much surprised along our line of route not to hear the sound—the atmosphere was clear, but I suppose the wind must have been adverse, for I could not hear it two miles off. As soon as my baggage was in the hotel, I started for the Fall, which was only a few rods from the house. The roar of the falling torrent now filling the region with its peculiar thunder, added awe to my expectations. I descended by the railway which leads down to the foot of the precipice in a car, whose velocity is graduated by machinery, and shortly stood at the level of the river. When looking up at the American Fall, and away at the vast Horse Shoe, the wonderful, undying impression of the scene began to exist—that memory which remains, amid the after scenes of life, and through the lapse of years, vivid, unaltered, and entire—graven upon the soul in characters of light, which fade only when the soul leaves its tenement of clay—and perhaps not then.

Minute mathematical and measured descriptions of Niagara are useful and interesting to those who desire to know the exact number of inches in its span, and plunge, the rapidity of its current, or the number of gallons which it furnishes per second; many such I had read and fancied the pleasure of applying their details. But I had not stood many seconds looking up on the mass of descending waters, listening to the sustained tumultuous roar which seemed to fill the vault of heaven, and watching that vast spray-cloud which went up like the smoke of a burning city, when all remembrance of self, mathematical rules,

Library of Congress

&c., was lost. No longer conscious of existence I stood rapt, motionless, speechless, entranced with a wonder for which no utterance was vouchsafed, to express which words would seem blasphemous, and silence alone was eloquent, a state or phase of mind so far removed from the natural and material feelings of daily life, so sublimated; E 74 and spiritual, that I know not of any other name to define it except spirit-prayer.

There is a sublime wisdom in that familiar Psalm—

“The Lord, in his holy temple, Let all the earth keep silence before him!”

Roused at length by the drenching spray, I retraced my way to the hotel, and when I retired to my room I found that the window of the chamber looked out upon the Fall, and sitting down, I relapsed into a reverie. I felt that that moment was the fulfilment of one of those youthful aspirations which the mind purposes to itself in coming time. And I thought upon those school-mates who, long ago, as we gazed upon the pictured page representing the Falls of Niagara, as one of the Seven Wonders of the world, had echoed with boyish glee the resolution of going to travel when we were men, and visiting that wonderful cataract about which we loved to read; and of the poor Indian whose canoe was drawn into the rapids, and who, when hope was over, rolled himself in his blanket and so was carried over the precipice. And now here I sat within the thunders of its roar, while many thousand miles lay between me and that land within whose soil many of those playmates years ago had mouldered. I felt the favour and was thankful, and fancied how happy, Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, must have felt when, at length, the dream of his life was accomplished, and he fathomed with his lance-shaft the fountain of the Nile.

How often is it, in the maturity of manhood, when we have achieved some favourite position or enterprise, that we find it to be but a super-structure raised upon a plan which has had its birth in the fervid imagination of our boyhood—at such moments we feel how much truth has been spoken by him who said—

Library of Congress

"The child is father to the man."

Late that night I was lulled into slumber by the sound of its waters, and awoke with the sun to listen to its everlasting hosannas.

The season of my visit was November, consequently the visitors were very few. The trees on Iris island, fringing the Fall and rapids, E 2 76 were spangled with frozen spray, and I doubt not the scene was more impressive in the absence of a crowd of visitors, than it would have been in June and July. In my opinion, such scenes should be viewed alone when practicable; and there is as much truth as beauty in Walter Scott's directions for viewing Old Melrose Abbey:—

"Then go—but go alone—the while: Then view St. David's ruined pile, And, home returning, soothly swear, That never was scene so sad, so fair."

Not until the fourth day, when I had been on the Canadian side, on and under the Table Rock, or Iris island, at the Tower, and Hog's Back, down Biddel's Stairway, along the shore by the rapids above the island, and had crossed in a boat before the curtain, did the first unfavourable impression completely vanish, and a true idea of Niagara, in its vast sublimity, settle itself in my mind.

On the morning of the second day, I proceeded, after breakfast, to the island, and on until I reached the tower, from the top of which I 77 enjoyed a magnificent view of the Horse Shoe, but the cold was too severe to make a long Sojourn. I observed beneath the Tower a detached body of rock literally overhanging the gulf, at either side the waters poured down, and it struck me that the view from there down into the pit would be very fine; the distance was about ten or twelve feet, and a tree had lodged against it, which though covered with sleet ice, offered a practicable though precarious footing. Stopping a moment to weigh the matter, a slip, or a nerve failing, and all was over literally, for beneath ran the torrent like a mill-stream; and a few feet off was the edge of the fall,—but then the

Library of Congress

view was worth the venture. One step, two—right in the middle of the space now—the frost crackles beneath my foot—feel a resolution to grasp desperately for the tree should I slip—another step stealthily as a cat—and I leaped upon the Terrassin rock. With firm footing and a tight grip I now reached out and looked actually down into the gulf, and felt repaid; it was terrible, yet grand—sublime—unspeakable—speculations ran through the mind, 78 what if the rock was to tumble over, or if the head grew dizzy, or if one were to jump down, well, what then? The thought was horrible—to be dashed down into the caverns below, and ground into powder by that bellowing mass of waters. The spray blew in ice points against my face, I turned back, got to the tree, and with breath held hard, trod cautiously on my former foot-marks, and now a spring, once more on *terra firma*, and take my hotelward way to supper and meditation.

Proceeded next morning to the Suspension Bridge, which is about a mile below the Falls, and will amply repay a visit; it consists of four wire cables 1160 feet long thrown across the Niagara, where the banks are 800 feet apart, the supporting, or buttress towers, are 50 feet high, the height of the bridge from the water 230 feet, and the depth of the water beneath (said to be) 250 feet., The cables are composed of iron-wire laid together untwisted, and bound at short distances, they have been boiled in oil during construction to render them impervious to the influences of weather. From these cables, at distances of about 79 four feet, depend wires, to which are attached transverse bars of wood, on which are laid binders running parallel to the cables, on which the flooring is laid down. There is a lath-railing at either side, and the structure is complete, looking so fragile amid the rude scenery, that the timid are fearful of its capacity to sustain their weight; I passed out on it, and when at the centre actually felt as if I were suspended in air, which effect is heightened by the undulating motion (not swinging) which is caused in it by the wind. It commands a good view of the Falls, especially at sunset when the whole curtain is seen reflecting in gorgeous hues the beams of the sinking orbs.

Between two and three miles lower down, is “The Whirlpool.” There being no guides to procure at this season, I had to proceed alone; below the bridge! struck a trail along the

bank, which I followed until I arrived at my destination. Summer and refreshment houses stood, bleak and tenantless, in the vicinity, and a tortuous descending path, formed among the rocks and tree-roots, led down the steep bank to the river; following this, I shortly stood on the brink of 80 that vast basin in which the maddened and foamy floods of the great Niagara, swept madly round and round, tossing the trunks of gigantic forest trees upon its breast, as if they were so many wheaten straws; above and around rose the shore like a wall, wooded to the top with hardy evergreens. From the point of descent at which I stood, no visible outlet is apparent, and one can fancy that the river is swallowed up by some huge subterranean cavern. This appearance is caused by the fact that the river shoots off from this basin at right angles, and as the bank at this side projects considerably, you do not discover the outlet till you have proceeded on to the angle of the bank. The solemn and grand effect of that vast basin, is second only to the Falls, and will impress more on first sight. The water in the centre seems higher than that at the edge, and the whirls are continually shifting their position.

I would counsel all travellers to approach Niagara by the Buffalo route, as then they get successive views of the rapids and cloud-mist, and are more favourably impressed: the best views are from the Canadian side.

81

As a contrast of fancy and fact, I subjoin two extracts. The first was written some fourteen days prior to visiting the Falls, so that it might be thoroughly forgotten; and the second was written when I had seen them in every phase. I must mention that, however I got the idea, I was fully persuaded that you look up at Niagara from the bank, instead of the fact that you look down at it, and this was with me, and others I have since spoken to, one cause for unfavourable and false impressions as to its magnitude. Nor should the traveller omit making a foot-journey along the banks from the Falls to the whirlpool; the scene is magnificent, and the study of the rock-formation not unprofitable. I do not mean to inflict a

Library of Congress

geological disquisition, but may be pardoned for saying that I think the banks evidence a secession of the fall from Queen's Town to their present position. E 5

TO NIAGARA.

Hail! mighty preacher of th' Eternal cause! In mist and thunder robed; thou hast stood forth
Since earth's fair orb sprung out from chaos' womb, Obedient to the fiat of the Lord.

82

Voiced with the wave and whirlwind's linked power, Thy theme has been—" Behold
the Power of God!" How hast thou awed the prideful heart of man, As he compared his
vaunted power with thine, And felt thy vastness grasp his staggering mind, Bending it
down before thy God, and his.

How terrible thy strength! in vain the soul Seeketh for words to mirror what it feels. Thy
deaf'ning roar, once heard, is heard for ever; But never yet imagined until heard. So
solemn, ceaseless, and intensely deep A sound-such as the spirit wings may make When,
at the blast of the archangel's trump, Her myriad myriads earth delivers up.

To thee the memories of a thousand years Are but as those of yesterday to man. Upon thy
glittering crest what records live, Of nations—melted, like thy cloudy spray, While thou still
pourest on, unchanged, unchangeable.

In loneliness, when yet the stalworth elk, The shaggy bear, or the grim-visag'd wolf,
Looked down in mute amazement at thy wave.

Or, when the red man of the forest came, And, leaning on his bow, heard, in thy roar, The
talk of the "Great Spirit" to his child.

Or, later still, when the adventurous white Look'd at thee, speechless, then returned to
tell His brethren of the wonder he had found. Till now, when o'er thy foamy gulf he flings

Library of Congress

83 The giddy path, thou wert, and art, the same— Untouched by Time—an emblem of eternity.

Thou art an altar! and full many a soul Hath here performed true sacrifice to God; Each thought is prayer sublime, soul-spoken prayer, Evoked, meet tribute, from the gazer's heart To Him! who formed the cataract, and who Sustains the creatures floating in its spray.

Leap on! thou mighty water, plunge, leap on! My soul dives with thee, down into the deep, And of thy foamy bubbles feeleth one Which through thy circling spray doth upward sweep, Till, high in heaven, it melts.—The spell is gone: Yet still I gaze on thy eternal leap, And, gazing, feel thy lucent bow impart Immortal brightness to my throbbing heart.

Albion, N.Y. Nov. 10, 1848.

TO NIAGARA.

(Approaching from the South.)

Hush! hark! it is—the distant cataract's roar!

Like muttering thunders, muffled in dense cloud, The sound of many waters cometh up, The awful herald of its majesty.

(The Rapids.)

Look! how the waters, here, glide swiftly on, Hasting to make that grand, yet dreadful, leap! And, here—as nearer to the verge they rush— See how they bound and shake their snowy plumes, 84 And rush, in foaming ecstasy along! Seen level 'gainst the far Canadian shore, Like to a plumed troop of goodly knights, In headlong charge careering on—they seem. And, lo! that mighty cloud of smoke-like mist! The giant spirit of unnumbered waves, Springing from out their sepulchre below, Proclaims how fearful are the deeps beneath!

Library of Congress

(Under the Table-rock.)

Pause!—now look up!—the mighty flood appears In everlasting plunge—still pouring,
down: An awful grandeur—terrible to see— Dealing its thunders on the rocks beneath,
Till it has worn a valley in their breast; In whose unfathom'd depths the furious tides Are
crushed into a seething snowy foam.

How terrible the din that cometh up From out the bowels of that watery hell! As if ten
million water-fiends were there, Each voiced with tempest, and with thunder arm'd.

Again, look up!—how beautiful appears The emerald crown that binds the torrent's brow.
How glorious is the crescent watery veil! Of white, and green, and purple folds composed;
That never hath, or will be, drawn aside. And there—see how the eddying mist gives out
The gorgeous beauties of Jehovah's bow— Gilding that wild tumultuous war, of waves, As
when it spanned the Araratic plain.

85

Next view this ancient, wave-worn, towering shore, Frowning on pigmy man, in grandeur
down; And those Titanic rocks, that lie around, Strewn by the torrent on its conquering way
— With many a mouldering trophy of its power, Makes up a picture of the true sublime. 'Tis
meet that here the creature should bow down In duteous homage to the Lord of All, And
blend his praises with th' cataract's hymn.

Thou glorious throne of the Almighty God, Round which eternal incense doth arise. Here,
where the beetling rocks o'erhanging nod, My soul breathes forth its humble sacrifice To
Him! whose wonders flowed thro' "Moussa's" rod— Within whose hollow hand the great
deep lies; The living God, who will be, is has been— The great I Am!—omnipotent—
unseen!

At even the risk of being considered tedious, I will close this chapter with an anecdote of
a cat—you smile, but remember, Sterne chose an ass for a theme, and moreover his ass

Library of Congress

was dead; whereas my cat is a living subject; and, if according to the old proverb, “A living ass is better than a dead lion,” why I think I may conclude a living cat better than a dead ass; “but to our tale,” as Burns sings.

When the suspension bridge was finished some 86 persons of an enquiring spirit wondered what would be the consequence of falling into the river from it. Some contended that a person would be killed before reaching the water; others averred that a man might jump off and afterward get ashore, and instanced Sam. Patch; but Sam's death contradicted his life—so that the case remained undecided. There resided in the village a large tortoiseshell tom, whose serenading propensities and strength of lung procured for him the vengeance of the sleep-loving in the neighbourhood; and it was agreed to experiment on Tom, because it was concluded that the nine lives of a cat were equal at least to the one of a man, or, at the utmost, to that of a tailor: so it was agreed upon, for the sake of science, to make Tom walk the plank. Being captured and placed in a pillow-case, he was borne to the bridge, although during the progress he ceased not to petition, in strong terms, against such treatment, but all to no avail. He was treated with as little commiseration as an Odalisque condemned to the Bosphorus, and 87 victimized to science by being slipped out from the centre of the bridge 230 feet down, and 400 from shore, the rapids below running at least eight or ten miles an hour. With a short scream, back curved, tail and claws extended, Tom obeyed the laws of gravitation, and went down down into the flood with a very loud squash; but, we suppose, like the brave tars that Campbell sings of, he

Held his breath For a time;

for, he shortly after was seen to emerge some three rods below the place where he fell, and with nose and ears, above the water, was seen to make some feeble strokes as he was swept away to the whirlpool.

Well, science was satisfied, the thing was practicable, and on the evening of the next day the matter was being dwelt upon, when lo, the identical Tom, wayworn and feeble sued for admittance at the door by a faint cry, as if he said, "Poor Tom's a-cold!" altogether different from his once sonorous voice. Wonder gave way to pity,—he has become a 88 historical and sacred cat,—and even his former enemies now—

"Love him for the dangers he has passed."

But so indignant is he at the treatment, that he has never revealed how he managed to get out of the whirlpool to which he most certainly must have been carried.

89

CHAPTER V. THE STAGE (NOT DRAMATIC).

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road— So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad Air can accomplish, with his wide wings
waving. Byron.

On with the horses! off to Canterbury; [puddle. Tramp, tramp, o'er pebble, and splash,
splash, through Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry. Byron.

I proceeded from Niagara to the S.W. corner of Ontario Lake, visiting Lundy's Lane, and Queenstown Heights, which, with Chippewa, are worth seeing as battle-grounds. Fort Niagara on the lake looks pleasingly desolate, the fortress of a people who are emulous of peace, yet confident in their ability to conquer; the plan of the fortifications I think good, and it is capable of being rendered a very strong position in a very 90 short time; returning from thence to Lewiston I took the cars to Buffalo; a town the growth and importance of which has increased so rapidly, that it is difficult to predicate a limit to its wealth or population fifty years hence; the key port to western communication with canal and railroad, it has all the elements of a very large city, unless it be hindered by a projected railroad which will have its formation at a more southerly point on the lake, near Erie,

Library of Congress

which may somewhat divide the commerce with it. Returning from thence to Rochester, I visited the Genesee Falls, which are very pretty and are quite in the town, at least, the first leap. The succeeding falls are about a mile or so further down the stream, and will amply repay a visit. It was at the upper fall that Sam Patch made his last and fatal leap. Taking packet, I proceeded from Rochester down the Genesee valley to Dansville; then striking west through Alleghany, Cattarangus and Chetaque, struck the lake route to Cleveland at a point above the western point of Pennsylvania.

I should have adverted to the Indians met with 91 in the vicinity of Niagara; they are chiefly of the Cattarangus tribe, and are only demi-civilized. Many of them own land which they cultivate, and have few of those traits with which Cooper invests the red man. Some of the squaws are good looking; silent and dignified in manner, particularly in the carriage of the head. They wear blue cloth mantles or blankets; white silk gloves, (which, true to the sex, they take some trouble to display, and elaborately beaded mocassins. Their hair and eyes are black as night, their skin dark and fine, and the head well set and shaped; they differ as much from their western sisters of the Sioux, Fox, Osage, or Chocktaw, as a fine lady does from the wife of a western settler.

As an illustration of manners I will insert an occurrence which took place on the Lockport railway. One of the company in our car was a Baptist clergyman, whom I had heard deliver a lecture on the temperance cause the previous evening. I had made his acquaintance, and all went on pleasantly until within about six miles of Niagara, when a sudden stoppage of the train gave notice of something wrong. On going out 92 we found that the last car, laden with potatoes in sacks, had got off the rail. We of course had to stop, and the assistants commenced lifting out the sacks so that the car might be lifted on the track. The passengers turned out en masse, and a unanimous lift put it once again on the rails. Thinking this much enough for a passenger, I got into the car, and after some time, on looking out to see if they were near ready, was surprised to see my fellow-travellers, amongst whom was my reverend friend, who had thrown his cloak on the fence-rail, and now in black dress-coat, white cravat, &c., was working away, not in an amateur style,

Library of Congress

but right lustily, in helping to reload the car with the now wet and dirty sacks. Feeling the rebuke, I went out at once and did likewise; how far it would be considered orthodox in older countries for a minister to act so, is proved by the fact, that such an instance is seldom if ever seen. The incident, though trivial, speaks much for democratic manners.

I would now revert to the stage travelling in the Genesee valley; treating it as a subject of vital importance to subsequent wayfarers, and of 93 mirth or reflection to all and sundry of my home-staying readers. The mode of conveyance differs much, and is usually a consequence of the amount of mail to be carried, the state of the road, and the number of passengers. I usually found it an open waggon, sometimes without springs, which is used as the least likely to overturn; a buffalo skin or ancient umbrella, constituting the amount of protection against the weather. The road was usually a succession of hill climbing, with formidable rut-holes, into which ever and anon the Waggon dived with a most waggish indifference, or the familiarity of old acquaintance, but at an angle that tested thoroughly your power of balancing. The greatest amount of speed was four miles an hour, so that fifty miles was a day's work, and that work none of the lightest. If G.P.R. James takes a trip across those spurs of the Alleghany, you may rest assured that on the clear bracing morning in the winter of 1668 you will find the two travellers that might be seen descending a hill will not be mounted on powerful war-horses, and I confess it would be a desirable change in his next volume to find them 94 (as they are sure to be there) descending the hill in the rude stage waggon of the time.

The shaking is awful, nothing less; so much so, that I promise you if the most enthusiastic shaker takes passage by stage from Genesee to Jamestown he will be motionless in his devotions for a month after. You have for instance just reached the ridge of a hill, and the delighted eye wanders over the sea of forest-tops filling the valleys, away,—away,—far as the eye can reach; in the enthusiasm of the moment you forget road, stage, ruts, and everything else. You are absorbed in the grandeur of the prospect, and you are drinking in the enjoyment with lips apart and relaxed muscles,—the horses break into a trot, 'tis an easy descent. You turn to remark to your fellow-traveller on the beauty of the scene,

Library of Congress

when—whew!—oh!—crash! down you go, into a miniature sand pit, with a jog that pumps rather an unpoetic ejaculation out of you, knocks you over on your companion, and makes you feel as if a dislocation of the spine would not be a remarkable consequence. Rolling back to your position, you find no symptom of break or fracture in your 95 osseous frame, and feel thankful that your tongue had not been between your teeth at the time, else you had never again spoken. Add too, a rainy day, a surly driver, and bad team, or a wet and frosty night, and you will have an outline of the reality. I started one morning at four o'clock, in a sleigh from Pike, with three others. We had but two skins, and it did rain and sleet cuttingly. We got the skins up over our hats, and by sitting close, kept up somewhat our animal heat; but as to what we resembled, I know of nothing in animated nature to compare us with—so grotesque, burly, shapeless a mixture of bear and buffalo did we appear in the moonlight wrapped up in those skins.

I started another night over a bad road for a drive of sixteen miles. It was pitchy dark, and only the driver and I aboard. It rained when we left, and increased as we proceeded. I had a large muffler twisted round a heavy overcoat, and was wrapped in a skin. The cold was so intense that the rain froze as it fell. When an hour out, it grew more lightsome but colder, so that my muffler and hat were one sheet of slade ice, and 96 icicles depended all round from the rim of the hat. My hair and eyebrows also were hoary as old Winter is painted; by degrees I began to chill through, and when regularly torpid, did not feel the cold so much. On we went; oh! such a dreary, slow, interminable road; and when at last we reached the village, long past midnight, I could scarcely get out, of the vehicle. A drowsy helper opened the inn-door to our loud halloos, and within a large bar-room in an ample fireplace blazed and sparkled a glorious log-fire; the sight alone resuscitated me, and he who does not appreciate a pine-log-fire after a night's ride must be a Siberian. I must repeat it; there it was, a gladsome, quivering fire, such as was used in the old baronial castles of merrie England in the olden time; there it was, crackling a welcome to the frozen and wayworn traveller, lighting up with its pleasant smile the nooks of the ample

Library of Congress

bar-room, flinging fantastic shadows on the dingy walls, and shedding a cheering pathway of light out upon the wet road-way and smoking team, through the open door.

Never did Gheber feel more devoted to the 97 generous element than did I for full half-an-hour, when being thoroughly thawed into consciousness and feeling, I commenced to test by sundry gymnastic movements whether the various muscles had regained their wonted elasticity, it was luxury itself to sit there and feel the suspended vitality creep back into its accustomed channels, and watch the sparks as they shot about joyously. I was just contrasting this fine, ample, hospitable fire-place with its quaint andirons and that yule log, with the intense, imprisoned coal fire, with polished grate and shining fender, and was mentally deciding in favour of log-fires, when the "help" came, candle in hand, to ask if I wished for a bed; a reluctant affirmative, and I was shortly asleep, and awake next morning with *mens sana in corpore sano* , and once more ready for the road.

At Chetaque lake the driver pointed out a natural curiosity of two beech-trees springing from the earth at a distance of about 12 feet at the bottom; and when having run up some 30 or 40 feet, joining into one tree; when it passes up for about 12 feet in one stem, and then branches off into two several tops. I do not F 98 know if such Siamese trees are familiar to arboroculturists, but to me (who am not versed in forestry) it appeared a strange freak of Nature. In descending from Chetaque lake, I had a magnificent panorama of Erie, it being some 800 feet below the mountain-lake which I have mentioned. It was the evening of a clear, cold December day, as I wound down slowly in my buggy. On the level, the sun was setting gloriously behind that inland sea, touching the dark pine-forest with a golden splendour, making up, in my fancy, a scene of surpassing beauty.

During the latter part of this route the snow and sleet having been congealed on the leafless branches and pine-tops of the forest gave the scene a strange, yet beautiful appearance. The woods looking like so many alabaster trees, and in the clearings, where the snow had fallen deep, the various stumps assumed, to the fancy, the shapes of marble statuary. The scenery from Pike to Ellicotville, at parts of the road, is very fine, as in fact

Library of Congress

it is all through that valley. I subjoin the production of a spare hour in a roadside inn, as illustrating the scenery alluded to, 99 and as it happens to occur in my dottings of Chetaque.

THE SNOW FALL.

December, 1848.

It cometh down, it cometh down, A messenger from heaven; Pure as the robe those spirits wear, Whose sins have been forgiven. How beautiful the falling flake Within the sunbeam glows, As gently o'er the guilty earth A glittering veil it throws.

It girdles round the mansion Where the rich man's feast is spread, And barreth up the log-hut, Where the poor man breaketh bread! It beareth up the flying sleigh, With its load of fair and brave, And smooths the rugged outline Of the stranger's sodless grave.

It cometh down, it cometh down, In many a glittering flake: In gaping gorge, and shelter'd vale, Its dwelling it doth make. On the leafy pine it beareth, Till the noble tree bows down; And it placeth on the mountain-head A glorious, glittering crown.

And where the grand old forest Lifts its thousand sere arms bare, It cometh in its loveliness, And sleepeth softly there; F 2 100 Enfolding in its pure embrace Each bare and leafless bough; Till, like a wood of purest pearl, It shineth beauteous now.

But—it drifteth! oh, it drifteth! In the wildered hunter's face, Till, all wearied out, he sinketh In its deadly, chill embrace: And the sleep of death comes o'er him, Like a pale and dreamy cloud, As the freezing snow-flakes fold him In their bright and seamless shroud.

Still it cometh, oh, it cometh! Down from the Lord above, As a type of his sweet mercy, As an emblem of his love. Of that wedding-garment beauteous Speaks it to the sons of men, In which that soul is clothed Who repenteth of his sin.

For stage-travelling in the west, I must reserve another chapter; and we will now proceed down the Ohio to Orleans, when the west will be considered in its features of interest and beauty. *Allons!*

101

CHAPTER VI. OHIO! *i.e.* THE BEAUTIFUL.

Hi! ho! the boatman row, Going down the river of the Ohio. *Song.*

Erie, a moderate sized town, but unprogressive, is the only port of Pennsylvania on Lake Erie; when I call it unprogressive, I mean it is so comparatively with Cleveland, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Chicago, or Milwaukee, but would be called progressive when compared with European towns of the same age. I walked down from the hotel to the pier each evening, to observe the sunset, which was extremely beautiful! The deer-shooting, in this section, was going on briskly, and with good success. Proceeding south, I entered the state of Ohio, and, after three or four days, reached Cleveland, a fine city, pleasantly situated on the lake; in fact, it is the most beautiful 102 town in Ohio, and is destined to be a place of great commerce and importance. From Cleveland I proceeded to Sandusky city, lying some 64 miles west. This stage, I drove a span of young horses; part of the drive was by night, over a rough, and, in some places, dangerous road. There were four buggys in company, so our party was a pleasant one. As the night fell, the man who knew the route best, took the lead; I followed, and the remainder brought up the rear. So black was the darkness, that I could not, at times, see the leading buggy, although not 10 yards off. By midnight we got to an hotel, and, on comparing notes, found that all had trusted to the sagacity of the horses as to keeping the road, and the innkeeper told us we had passed a most critical point some half mile back.

On the morrow, early, we made Sandusky, a miserable place, and, though the terminus of a railway, having none of those signs that indicate a vigorous and progressive people. The only thing to distinguish it is the exorbitance of the hotel charges, which I afterwards

Library of Congress

found to be generally complained of. I felt astonished at not 103 finding the forest-trees as large here as I anticipated they would have been west of the Alleghanies, yet some of the timber is heavy. A violent snow-storm had set in, which, in twenty-four hours, laid the snow 2 feet deep on the level. In passing south, the land stretched away in level tracts, the extreme opposite of the state of New York: the houses, generally, have also a different construction, having, almost invariably, a verandah running on one side, and, in many instances, the hotels have a court in the centre, with a verandah running round. As the State Congress was sitting in Columbus, I proceeded there, and found it composed of a body of gentlemen, who seemed to possess, in clearness of judgment, vigour, and experimental wisdom, ample compensation for the absence of those formalities which are considered so essential to law-makers and law-making in the older countries. There was not a single marquis, earl, lord, duke, or prince, in the assembly, neither woosack, mace, seal, nor wand, neither robes, liveries, nor titles; even the arrangement was so barbarous that the desks of the members, and the table of the 104 speaker, were crowded with little boys; and the common people, the *plebs*, the *canaille*, oh, profanity! were admitted inside the rail without fee or pass from an honourable member; and yet it was astonishing to see how those men (some of whom were very rough looking), without the aid of policemen, exclusiveness, or midnight sittings, did there and then, in full noon-day, propose, argue, elucidate, amend, perfect, and pass measures to promote the welfare and safety of themselves and fellow-men in a manner that might be profitably imitated by some of those august assemblies that legislate for the millions, with the concomitants of ermine, lawn, garters and pedigree.

There are those who consider that names and dress have nothing to do with facts; that a legislator will be much the same, whether my lord, duke, marquis, count, or baron, whether dressed in official robes, or as plain Obadiah Straighthair, in a suit of homespun; with such persons I feel inclined to differ, for, with most of the people of the olden countries, those accidents have much weight. The wearers cannot conceive 105 that they are worthless when they have cost so much, nor that they who possess them are, by any means, the

Library of Congress

same class of beings as the great multitude, *sans* hatchments, pedigree, or title, But put aside titles and livery, and how soon will Smith and Brown begin to have an affection of the vision, not being able to see any difference, except such as mind and morals, make, between the Right Honourable Lord Harrington Paget De Vere, Duke of Ravenna, and Grand Keeper of His Royal Highness's Kennel, and John Jones, the learned operative. There is much, verily, in a name; nor is there any of the fortresses in which feudalism, monarchy, and oligarchy have entrenched themselves, but will be surrendered with a less fierce struggle than that of titles and livery. The satirist hath put wisdom in that aphorism which says:—

“A saint in lawn is twice a saint in crape!”

I approached Cincinnati from Hamilton. A magnificent view of the valley and town is to be had from a point on the road about 4 miles from the city. I had but a moment's glance at that gigantic basin filled with forest-tops for many a mile; and even this glance was had by reaching out of the diligence window, yet that was sufficient to mark it on my memory as one of the finest views I had had in the state. When we entered the Queen City of the West it was night, and anything to equal the roughness of the streets (except a corduroy rail-road) I never experienced. The snow had frozen in huge patches, and as we jogged along over those miniature hills, I felt a most unfavourable impression creeping over my mind with respect to the place. A sallow-looking fellow-traveller of mine observed very graphically, that “it was enough to shake the teeth out of a saw.” After much driving and counter-driving for the purpose of setting down passengers, (who are carried to any part of the town they specify), we pulled up at the Galt House just in time to find supper at the second table. The supper was excellent, the company in the sitting-rooms numerous and loud-spoken. Gradually I began to correct my first impressions, and to find myself in a great and prosperous commercial depot. How much, since the days of our mother Eve, our judgment and feelings depend on the gastric juice, let those testify who have effected a loan or favour from some tight-handed friend after dinner, which, if proposed to an empty stomach, would have been spurned to a certainty. And bear witness, ye

Library of Congress

travellers, how much a scene is enchanted by a well compacted lunch, or a comfortable inn within distance. Or ye, who by ill fortune have toiled over classic ground with an empty flask and an exhausted wallet, the nearest house 10 miles off, and have had nothing save fresh air since, breakfast; how have ye with hasty foot spurned the hallowed ground, and meditated rather upon a warm supper than the destiny of heroes? Attest, ye jurors, valiant for law and justice, who have manfully withstood 24 hours of abstinence, have speculated on the digestibility of your boots, and eventually seen by the eye of conscience, how wrong your opposition has been, and that a review of the evidence convinces you at once of the necessity of a verdict and breakfast.

When approaching the city we passed several 108 droves of hogs, perfect models of fatted porkers, the price varying from 3¼ to 3 ½ dollars. The quantity slaughtered here is enormous, some of the houses averaging a thousand a day, hence it has been facetiously called Porkopolis. The growth of this city is most prodigious, to use the term of Dominie Sampson. Some sixty years since the river wound along past a few log-huts of some demi-Indian hunters; now it flows past a city of some 123,000 inhabitants. As to the atmosphere of the place, it seemed to me, after a fortnight's acquaintance, to be next of kin to Liverpool, dull, thick, misty, fog and vapour laden. It is a place however which improves on acquaintance, and at certain seasons of the year a pleasant place of residence; but in midwinter and midsummer it is a place to be avoided. Here it was that I caught a first view of the fair Ohio (*La Belle Rivière* of the French); it is a magnificent stream, has a current of some three miles an hour, but is very fickle in its water-stage, often varying from 12 to 14 feet in two or three days. This is caused by the sudden rise and fall of the many 109 feeders which supply it, many of which flood with inconceivable rapidity.

The steamers which ply on this river are different in construction, and less beautiful than those on the Hudson, yet are better suited for carrying freight, and long voyages, than the north river boats: they are all high pressure; those on the Hudson are all low pressure.

Library of Congress

The Hudson boats run faster, and are less liable to burst, yet they have been tried on the western waters without success.

March 2nd, 1849, Friday.—A rainy and unpleasant day; I went down to the Levee (*i.e.* quay), and enquired on board one of the Orleans packets, the “William Noble,” when she would start, as the printed board intimating in eight inch letters that “the William Noble for New Orleans this day,” had been, or may have been stating the same thing, for any indefinite number of days previously. The nearest approach to certainty is to be had only by examining the quantity of freight on board, and on the levee for shipment, and conclude accordingly. If she lies high and there is 110 a good deal of freight to go aboard, with only a few passengers entered, you may read this day, as in five days, and so on, according to circumstances; it graduates down, until, eventually, it may be held to signify, to-morrow. Sometimes you will perceive the dense smoke, and hear the bustle of preparation to be off; you conclude she is going now, sure; but no—you need not hurry, it is only a pleasant fiction of the Captain's; they are merely firing up, as the finale of advertising stratagems; it is merely a puff, and coming evening ends in smoke. With all this experience in view, I did, nevertheless, ask the clerk when she would start. “This evening sir, at five o'clock precisely, sir,” said he, with the emphatic precision of a man that considered five minutes after five as a perfect impossibility; perhaps I asked deprecatingly, “six o'clock will be time enough to come down?”

“We start at five sir,” was the oracular response, with the addenda; “if you wish to go with us, sir, you had better be on board at quarter to five o'clock.”

111

Having paid our fare, with an inherent longing after the wonderful, we were on board at fifteen to five, but there she lay, smokeless, and steamless; her gangway filled with a stream of strong men, rolling in heavy barrels, boxes, &c. We went up to the saloon, sat down at the stove, and counted the minutes (not that we had the most remote idea of

Library of Congress

departure), but to demonstrate to our own satisfaction, that we had once and again hoped against fate, by relying on the clerk's promise.

"How soon will you get out, sir?" said a new comer to my precise friend.

"After dark, I expect, sir!" replied the infallible official.

Whereupon we mentally hugged ourselves, from a knowledge of the superior experience which we had bought and *paid for*.

At nine o'clock we were to start in the morning, and in the morning we were to be off at ten o'clock, which said ten o'clock eventually came in the familiar shape of four o'clock in the afternoon, when we at length slipped off down the Ohio; and as we watched the receding 112 town, and the beautiful banks, we could not help philosophising a little on the uncertainty of terrestrial things in general, and the emphatic uncertainty of the starting time of Orleans boats, in particular; and as the shades of evening rendered the outlines of our course dim and shadowy, and we watched the two volumes of brilliant sparks, that showered in a cascade of fire, from the tall chimneys, shooting hither and thither in mazy, serpent-like masses, we found we had arrived at a settled conviction, which we hold to this day, that, with the captains' clerks and other officials of steamboats, hyperbole is a natural form, especially on subjects appertaining to the capacity, safety, speed, and starting time, of the particular boat with which they are connected.

But to every question there are two sides, nor do we think there is unmixed evil in the world. The saloon of the western steam-boat runs clear fore and aft the length of the boat; it is elegantly fitted up, and has a succession of two berthed state-rooms at either side for the whole length. The table is good, and the general comfort provided 113 for; the charges are particularly moderate, being from 10 to 15 dollars for an Orleans passage (1500 miles) including board, attendance, &c.

Library of Congress

The Ohio presents a succession of views so beautiful, that the frequency surfeits the eye; the banks are hilly and well-wooded, the sweeps in the stream producing the most picturesque scenes. At points they are gemmed with towns, tillage-grounds, or vineyards; and again you will sail for miles along the primitive solitudes of the forest-banks, the only evidence of man being occasional log-hut of some hardy pioneer, who has cast his lot in the wilderness with a stout heart and strong arm to cut a competence from old woods. The flat boat or, "broad horn" may be called a feature of the river; it is met with at every bend, and consists of a square boat some 150 feet long, and 25 broad, manned by from four to eight or ten men, laden with various cargoes, and floated down by the current. At either side, and at the end, immense sweeps are rigged, by which the course is guided, as a necessity on so slow a passage. The crew commonly 114 amuse themselves by dancing, music, singing, &c.; one evening at sunset, as we swept into a magnificent reach with high banks, we saw a broad horn ahead, the steersman standing erect with a long tin horn, from which he elicited a music which, if not artistic, was, when taken in connection with the solitude of the place and the tranquillity of that wide dreamy river, indescribably beautiful; the figure of the man was thrown boldly out by the sun's rays, his broad sombrero hat, loose clothing, and immovable attitude, with one foot advanced, and the long trumpet made a magnificent foreground, while his listeners, sitting or lounging around, completed a group worthy of an artist's pencil.

On the next day we reached Louisville, Kentucky, where we lay for some time, while the pilot was ascertaining if it were practicable for us to descend the Falls (as they are termed), which, to speak critically, are rapids occasioned by a descent of some 22 feet between Louisville and New Albany, a distance of about 2½ miles. During high water boats can pass over them readily, but at a low stage of the river, and when 115 heavily laden (as was our case) they have to pass through a canal of about a mile and a half in length. The morning was lowering and misty, and we were nearly all day getting through the canal, which is as dreary a place as can be. The men were worked hard, tracking, fending, &c., and were drenched to the skin. At the extremity are a few houses, one of which is a tavern

Library of Congress

kept by Mr. Porter, the Kentucky Giant. I went up to have a look at his highness, and found him about 7 feet 8 inches above his mother earth; he is round-shouldered, and ill-made; his feet and hands enormous; his height, when compared with ordinary men, is what Dominie Sampson would call "pro-di-gious!" his rifle is 9 feet long.; he weighs about 260 pounds; he seems sickly, and has, I believe, a diseased liver.

The Ohio at Louisville, and just above New Albany, stretches out, I should think, into a mile in width; nor does its scenic beauty lessen as we proceed, the high banks disappear, but the wooded bottoms are picturesque and full of interest to the traveller's eye; the width seems to increase as we proceed. The course is very tortuous, 116 which adds no little to the effect, each sweep or bend being juttied into by a wood-bank or bold bluff, round which you catch a glance of some upstream steamer, well in shore, puffing her way eastwards. Ducks, plover or pigeon, and the wild goose are seen in large flocks; in fact this portion of the country seems a hunter's paradise. And as one looks upon the wooded shores of Old Kentuck, the mind reverts to the days of Daniel Boone and his contemporaries, whose exploits claimed the admiring tribute of Byron's genius, and still on the winter's night by the blazing pine-log circle round the hearth, in many a backwoodsman's hut in the far west.

The bed of the river is changing and uncertain, hence continually crossing and veering, which gives a better view of the banks; the shore looks more wild and beautiful here than higher up; in some places you see a dense mass of slender saplings rejoicing in their youth, and growing luxuriantly right into the water; and at times—though rarely now—the antlers of a deer may be detected among their branches. 117 At other points, gaunt and grim old leafless trees toss their gnarled branches above the flood, or stoop into its waters, clinging to the yielding soil by a mass of half uncovered roots. In the morning a partial fog hangs upon the river, veiling the distant view, but adding to the effect of the scene. Here and there are scattered the log-huts of some chopper, but for which you might fancy yourself the first intruder on those solitudes.

Library of Congress

It is difficult to describe the feelings awakened by the continued occurrence of similar scenes. You have been steaming away for days and nights, and when you step out on the guards, there still is that full, calm, majestic river, with its beautiful shores winding away in the distance. I have sat and watched, and dreamed for hours as that magnificent panorama was unrolled before me, and must be forgiven if I erred in thinking that the pleasure so derived was as near an approximation to happiness as humanity can feel: the only want was that of some congenial spirit to sympathise in my enjoyment. Such was not to be had among our passengers, 118 who were material and utilitarian men, their speculations and discourse having no higher range than the value of the land per acre at either side, the speed of our boat, or the time of arrival at their various destinations.

Before reaching Cairo we passed a cave, known as “the cave in the rock;” it is on the north bank, and has the reputation of having heretofore harboured a gang of pirates; certainly it seems well suited for such tenants, and would furnish an excellent locality to the novelist, and has, I doubt not, traditions to form the groundwork of an interesting volume.

At the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi is situated Cairo, on the northern bank; the name completes the parody. The place consists of a few miserable dilapidated houses, and a wharf-boat; it is subject to inundation, and in 1844 was a fathom under water. Some few years since, a shrewd Yankee practised rather profitably on the national love of empire which distinguishes John Bull; he went over to London With a good map, showed the site of Cairo, the key to the immense commerce of the Mississippi valley,—the most profitable investment of capital on “airth,” and succeeded in selling it to a British company for—I forget how many thousand—dollars. Operations were commenced in the founding of a city that was speedily to surpass her namesake on the Nile: but lo! in the June flood of the Missouri their hopes received a damper, and John returned home a sadder and a wiser man, thoroughly vexed with the Yankees, and effectually cured of speculating in far-off lands. Yet it seems to me that Cairo is emphatically the site for a great western city, greatly superior in point of locality to St. Louis, and naturally the point of commerce for

the upper and lower rivers; and as to its being liable to inundation, that is merely a matter of dollars and cents; for as to the possibility of making it an eligible city site, those only question it who have not seen or heard of St. Petersburg or Holland: for it is perfectly true that if the encroachments of the ocean can be checked and overcome, surely the annual rise of a river can be guarded against. This fact is certain to be believed in at a future time; and it is 120 but reasonable to predict that in a century hence, Cairo will be the largest city off the sea-board, else, the American capitalist will have lost his characteristic judgment, enterprise, and energy.

121

CHAPTER VII. THE MISSISSIPPI.

“Or get thee out on the far western plains, And trace the white Missouri, when it flows,
Swelled with the tribute of autumnal rains, Or the far Rocky Mountains' melted snows,
Rolling her volume to the southern main, Embracing mighty rivers as it goes, Till, lake like
spread, in many a mazy sweep, It moves, embanked in beauty, to the deep.”

The Mississippi is entered by the Ohio at Cairo, but why the river bears the name of the Mississippi, I cannot imagine, as the river properly bearing that name is surpassed in volume and extent by the Missouri (Mother of Floods), which is navigable up to the Yellow Stone, 1,000 miles beyond St. Joseph, while the navigation of the Mississippi ceases at St. Paul's. The waters, moreover, of both the Illinois and Upper Mississippi are clear, while that of the Missouri, from G 122 her having wandered for thousand of miles across the prairies of the West, is almost cream colour; so that she imparts to the whole volume of waters her hue, and therefore it is strange, that from her junction with the Mississippi, her maternity is denied, and the lower portions of her course, from the Confluence, called the Mississippi instead of Missouri.

The appearance of the Mississippi, on entering from the Ohio, is very fine; but in the absence of high banks is not so imposing as it would otherwise be. The distance was

Library of Congress

veiled by a fog, which lay some thirty feet deep on the water; but after breakfast the curtain was drawn off by the sun's rays, revealing banks of beauty, and the wide and far-stretching stream. In the evening, the river was literally bridged by a continuous flight of pigeons; so numerous were they, that they literally darkened the air like a cloud. Myriads on myriads kept pouring on without cessation, and taking the breadth of the river, the length of time crossing, and their probable speed, I estimated the column to be 10 miles long. Wilson, the ornithologist, says that he once saw a pigeon-flight 123 in Kentucky, 240 miles by 1 broad, containing 223,272,000 pigeons, which would consume 1,742,400 bushels of mast per day. This reminds me of an anecdote current in New Jersey, which is too good to be omitted.

A number of gentlemen were sitting round the bar-room of a hotel, the subject of discourse being the size of a pigeon-flight that had passed over the village that day, when one of the number, who was a great admirer of Captain Crockett, started a new point by saying—

“Well, gentlemen, you need not make so much difficulty about the length of that pigeon-streak, as I once saw myself a flight of crows a mile wide, 25 miles long, and they wor so thick you could n't see the sun.”

“How long did you say that flight of rooks was?” asked a tall Vermonter, who had been silently listening all the while.

“Five and twenty mile, sir!” said the narrator, as he turned round, and indignantly confronted his interrogator, whose question seemed to imply a doubt. G 2

124

“Don't believe it, captain,” said the Vermonter, emphatically.

“Well, now, look here,” said the crow-man, as he deliberately took in the huge proportion of the sceptic, “you're a stranger here, I calculate, and I don't want to quarrel, so, rather than fight, if you are satisfied, I'll take off *half a mile* from the *thinnest part!*”

Library of Congress

Wild duck in quantities passed us within easy range of a Manton, with number 3 shot.

Took this morning, off another boat, a party of Californian emigrants, their captain an herculean Scotchman. They hailed from Indiana, and intended taking the overland route through Central America. Their equipments consisted of rifles, revolvers, bowie-knives, swords, hatchets, dirks, &c., and was of that quantity to make an ordinary man wonder, and a pacific man weep. The result of our examination and reflection, was a conviction of the truthfulness of the declaration that "Money is the root of all evil."

Among the adventurers was Dr.—, of Cincinnati, a most intelligent and gentlemanly man, 125 yet he was leaving behind him a wife and family of five children, with a practice of 3,000 dollars a-year; this he did deliberately, because he was a man past the age of impulse, his head was cooled by time, and he advanced his reasons philosophically. His equipment was a treat to see; his rifle (a telescope and globe-sighted one), revolvers, &c., being of the highest finish, and most improved principles. As a subject of thought for European wives, I would add that his lady, when he had fixed his mind on going, not only seconded the idea, but urged and expedited his departure. His intention was to settle down in California, the climate he asserted being his chief inducement in the enterprise. And when he has decided on his location he writes to his wife, she sells out, settles up his affairs, takes her family, and joins him. Great are the men of America, but greater are her women.

Being in Cincinnati at the season when the California trains started on the overland route, I will give a short description of one man in a train which contained some of my acquaintance, 126 and which may be taken as a general sketch of the emigrant's dress and equipment. Every steamer from St. Louis was crowded; the general appearance was that of men likely to succeed in any enterprise requiring physical energy and endurance; though occasionally you might perceive a delicately constituted clerk, of whom you felt his friends had seen the last. They were generally in companies of from thirty to fifty, duly officered, with rules, &c. which they all subscribed to: they were provided with waggons,

Library of Congress

tents, spades, picks, washers, &c., and either mules or ox-teams. Mr. T—who equipped himself for my satisfaction in his travelling dress, wore a broad-leafed sombrero hat, coarse trousers, and long waterproof boots; round his waist was a broad belt, from which depended a strong short sword and bowie-knife, and stuck in which was a tomahawk and two eight-barrelled revolving pistols; over this was a dark coarse shooting frock; slung on the shoulders was a long rifle, and a short heavy one with a smooth bore for hunting carried in the hand; his beard was full, and altogether 127 he looked as much a piratical rascal as any worthy that ever infested the Spanish main.

The result of a personal collision at the diggings, is almost certain to be death when such are the materials of a struggle, and as the moving class of feelings are certainly selfish such an occurrence is by no means unlikely; yet it is possible that a contrary effect may result from this state of affairs, because the equalising power which the rifle confers, may (from the very feeling of self-love) restrain men from infringing on the rights of their neighbour, when they know that any such encroachment may be punished by summary death. I think it is Whistlecraft who says (speaking of the English people in the reign of King Arthur);—

“They seemed a manly, generous, generation: Beard shoulders, eyebrows, broad and square, and thick Their accents; firm and loud in conversation; Their eyes and actions eager, sharp, and quick,— Showed them prepared, on proper provocation, To give the lie! pull noses! stab! and kick! And for this very reason, it was said, They were so very courteous, and well bred.”

Whether similar signs will be accompanied 128 by like results at the Sacramento I know not, possibly they will, let us hope so against doubt, for certes all that Whistlecraft cites as the causes of courtesy and good-breeding, is possessed by the Californians to a satisfactory amount.

Library of Congress

Quaint and strange are the speculations which the antiquarians indulge in respecting this land of gold; some with no little plausibility set it forth as the Ophir of Scripture, whence the ships of Solomon returned laden with the precious ore for the construction of the Temple, and allege the length of the voyage, which was three and half years, as a strong circumstantial proof. The climate of some portions of the region is said to be salubrious and pleasant, and seeing that a colony is about to be established there, it is probable that a city will grow up on the shores of the Pacific destined to rival even the world-famed ports on the Atlantic coast. Truly the Americans are a great people; for two thousand years has the auriferous sand sparkled beneath the mocassin of the Indian or the foot of the lazy Spaniard 129 unobserved, but scarcely has brother Jonathan been fixed in that location, when he commences digging and washing an untold revenue from the mountain and the plain. And although in the very nature of things it may be feared that the territory will be baptized in blood, yet were it possible to draw aside the veil of futurity, we should infallibly see it the residence of a rich and powerful people, a famous port to which the ships of every nation had turned their prows. This is the day of her prosperity, but first cometh a dark night of probation, an advent of fearful records.

The features of the Mississippi are numerous, many peculiar, some beautiful; of the latter, I would mention the appearance of a steam-boat approaching at night; you see it coming with its great glaring furnace eyes, growing brighter and brighter as it comes on, winking and glaring again as the firemen shut and open the doors of the fire; presently it passes, looking like some monster of the waters, half luminous, ribbed with light, gliding swiftly along into the darkness with a gruff chu-chu salutation, and pouring G 5 130 from its chimney-tops a long cascade of sparks which look exceedingly beautiful.

Another feature is the fog-curtain, which commonly lies upon the waters in the morning. Spread out upon the river it reaches nearly to the tree-tops, and across its spacious breadth, forming an appearance of peculiar beauty; the thin white vapoury curtain unrolls slowly as you advance, yet forms a barrier to vision for any considerable distance. While

Library of Congress

above this strata of mist may be seen distinct and clear, from the hurricane deck, the foliage of the shores or islands in their verdant, tortuous, and graceful outlines.

Although the width of the Mississippi at the confluence does not seem greater than that of the Ohio for some miles above that point, still the power of the current and its speed are perceptibly greater; its waters are more turbid, but pleasanter to the taste; the timber on the shores is in many places of very heavy growth, but owing to the width of the river, the trees appear small. The islands are numerous and beautiful, being thickly wooded to the water's edge with young cotton-wood, or other trees, and are the 131 habitations of innumerable water-fowl of different kinds.

A peculiarity of this river is the unceasing habit of changing its channel; impetuous, powerful, and eccentric, it takes off whole acres from one side of its boundary, and will deposit it as a gratuity on the other; when it takes a fancy to any particular line of course it commences scooping its way until ready for the assault, and then it charges on, carrying off timber, fences, &c., as trophies of its strength and victory.

The banks, in many places, seem higher than the country back, as if the river ran along a ridge, hence in the lower portions of its course it has to be confined by artificial embankments. The soil is very rich and yielding; wild geese, duck, king-fishers, turkey, buzzard, and eagles are to be seen all the time.

As in the Ohio, we passed many trading boats, being the ordinary broad-horn fitted up, a grocery, dry good, and notion store; its character being denoted by a pail and flag, and thus do those mercantile descendants of Noah float down the streams of life, time and the Mississippi; their 132 floating homes looking a picture of quietness, contentment and independence. They stop to barter at every plantation, and I doubt not, win gold, as they win their way. If matter of fact readers will excuse a philosophic reflection, we would say that truly those same broad-horns emblemise life well. Such are men on the stream of time: once freighted far up stream, they are floated off, and down they go, ever drifting

Library of Congress

towards the great gulf, on—on—on—if they improve not the time, repentance avails not, there is no return up stream, the imperious current ever glides on unstayed, bearing them upon its bosom to the waters of the great deep, whence they return no more for ever. Thus do we push off from the port of youth, and thus unceasingly and inevitably sail we down the current of time, until at length we reach that point where the spirit leaving its earthly tabernacle is “borne aloft into the azure of Eternity.”

Various are the burdens of the broad-horn; sometimes a load of cattle, or tombstones constitute a freight, and again, a strolling company of players; yes verily, a floating theatre, however 133 strange it may sound, is a reality of the Mississippi; of the capacities of the *troupe*, and their mode of rendering the “Swan of Avon,” I remember an anecdote, which, without vouching for, I subjoin. The company in this case consisted of the man who took the “quarters” at the door, the scene-shifter, and candle-snuffer, who were all represented in the person of the star of the evening, which luminary informed his plantation-audience, that he was about to perform “the powerful tragedy of King Richard the Third.” As an illustration of his manner of rendering the piece, our informant states, that while engaged in mortal combat with an imaginary “Richmond” with the one hand, he was fishing for cat-fish, behind the side-wing with the other.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to convey, by description, a just idea of the grand and peculiar beauties of this great river. It seems rather a succession of island-dotted lakes, than the bed of a stream. I have no sympathy with those who require mountains, cataracts, castles and crags, to give *their* idea of what the Mississippi 134 should have, to be grand and beautiful; to me it has ever seemed an unjust criticism, having no foundation in a correct and cosmopolitan judgment.

Though perfectly white, the water of the Mississippi is healthful to drink; it is slightly cathartic to the novice, and therefore should not be used too freely by the debilitated emigrant: next to the Thames it is said to be the best for sea-use in the world. And those

Library of Congress

citizens who live upon its banks are as enthusiastic in its praise, as are the inhabitants of Egypt of their deified Nilus.

Memphis, about two hundred and twenty-four miles south from the mouth of the Ohio, has a pleasing appearance from the water, and seems less of a parody on its ancient namesake, than the Romes, Carthages, Ninevehs, and Babylons of the United States. We reached there at night. The great river of Egypt had its magnificent representative in the father of waters; above the city, the full-orbed moon, shone in chastened splendour, while the lighted town looked as if the worshippers of Luna were celebrating her rites, as they were wont to do of old, in that mysterious valley of mighty dynasties.

The planters' houses, surrounded by negro huts, begin to appear as you proceed down from this point; contrasted with pre-conceived ideas, they are, in sooth, miserable affairs. In our fancy sketches of the southern planter, and his residence, we had imagined a spacious verandah house, of tasteful architecture, beautifully located, and shadowed by the tall pine, sycamore, cotton-wood, or acacia; the planter, we had set down as a mortal of Falstaff's mould, with open shirt collar, wide white pantaloons, linen coat, and a Panama hat, on the leaf of which a steeple chase might be held in Lilliput. But what is the fact, the houses in this section seemed chiefly one story buildings, about 40 feet long, of the most primitive design and execution, with the loghuts of the Negroes ranged in rows at either side, a rail-fence added, and the plantation is before you. The planter himself is as common place as needs be; a trifle more independent, somewhat slower than the north men he may be, but is not peculiarly contrasted in appearance.

As many of the accounts and stories of the Abolitionists are taken from a river-trip, I will insert, *verbatim*, my notes, taken at the time, which will account for some of the overdrawn pictures of the Garrison school, and will add that it is not fair, even in debate, to urge the condition of the river Negroes as a specimen of their general treatment, and is, at best, however good the motive, drawing a universal conclusion from a limited premiss.

Library of Congress

My first impressions, coloured by unquestionable prejudice, I now give, as written at the time.

The slaves are, however, all that I had imagined, coming up to the dark outline of fancy with a terrible precision. We put in to wood at one of those places, and there, for the first time, I saw those hewers of wood and drawers of water. A party of us went on shore to shoot; some distance in the wood, we found two men, three women, and two boys; there were twenty in all on this farm. The women were dressed in 137 a rough, shapeless, coarse garment, buttoned at the back, with a sort of trousers of the same material, rough shoes and stockings, the upper garment reaching nearly to the ankle; a kind of cloth, like a dirty towel, was wound round the head.

One of the women drove an ox-team; she had a large and powerful whip, with which, and a surprising strength, she belaboured and tugged the unwieldy team with great dexterity. The other women had five children, and assisted in loading the wood: the younger, about 16 years of age, had one child, and appeared to do nothing. The women, it seemed to me, worked harder than the men; but I observed the almost complete absence of memory in the elder woman; she could not remember where she had left the link-chain, or goad-whip, though but a few minutes out of her hand.

I do not pretend to mawkish sensibility, or to that refined fanaticism, which sees an infinite difference between the (nominally) free coal-miner of merrie England and the (so called) slave of the United States. Yet, I must confess, that 138 looking on that labour-crooked group, I felt a dislike, strong and definite, to that system which takes away even the hope of improvement, crushing down the principle of self-esteem in the man, until he reaches the passive and unambitious existence of the oxen which he drives. And looking on those women (Negro though they were), so unnaturally masculine, so completely unsexed, so far removed from all those attributes with which the name of woman is associated, I felt that no reason, based on an asserted right, no fiction of argument, could stand in my judgment but as dust in the balance, when the question is whether a human being

Library of Congress

(no matter of what colour, whether an Indian or an African sun may have burned upon him), should possess the liberty and right of securing his own happiness, to the extent of his ability. Their then state—their look, bodies, mind, and manner, were so many self-evident arguments against the system, which no representations, however plausible, could refute, even though coming from the lips of the great and gifted Calhoun; and all that I had listened to from southerners, on the voyage, disappeared like 139 gossamer in the tempest, before the mute living picture of wretchedness presented by that group.

Since the above note was taken, my field of observation has been much wider, and the consequence is, that while dissenting unequivocally from the principle of property in man or woman, still it is most true that the great majority of the slaves in the United States are physically better off than many thousands of British freemen and women, who are as truly enslaved by circumstances as the negroes are by law; nor are the southern men to be wondered at for feeling annoyed at the black imputations cast upon them by the fanatics of the north, and those of Europe. It should ever be borne in mind, that the southerner has been born among, and nursed by the negro; they constitute the medium of his support, and are his inheritance recognised by the law and the constitution; that consequently he sees the question from a widely different point of view, and naturally enough resents the villanous attacks, personal and general, which emanate from the uncharitably righteous fanatics on abolitionism, 140 who require more than honesty of purpose to excuse them in their speech and action.

But such is human nature;—one can easily fancy how the nobility of England, that contribute so largely and honestly no doubt to the forwarding of emancipation, look upon that strict course of reasoning which the Chartists are ever treating them with, reminding them that as the descendants of a horde of chivalrous freebooters who killed the occupiers, and took possession of the broad acres of England, they have no right to the said lands and revenues; and although this is true and trite enough, we do not see one of those nobles assign his demesne and rent-roll to the public. Yet we do see that they will, with certain feelings of the Pharisee, preside and contribute to the spoliation of their

Library of Congress

neighbour's estate, and write themselves virtuous and consistent withal. The difference altogether lies not in the want of analogy, but in the existence of self-interest. And this fact is attested by the corroborative one, that northern men and adopted citizens are the worst 141 masters, and furnish the very data for the complaints which they themselves perhaps swelled a few years previous. With an apology for this necessary episode, we will once again pass to the descriptive.

Proceeding south, the banks of the river assume an appearance of peculiar beauty; the heavy timber is occasionally broken with openings, in which the quiet looking verandah-cottage, surrounded by peach-trees laden with their beautiful pink-blossoms, stood a picture of plenty and contentment. The sycamore and cotton-trees were shooting out, and the massy richness of the foliage, the large ground-plants and bright coloured birds all proclaimed our approach to the sunny south. At Napoleon we took on board a party of seven Indians with their horses; they had travelled 500 miles, and being stopped by the floods, had to strike the river. They were a miserable-looking, travel-worn, and weather-stained group, as different from Fennimore Cooper's Indians, as well could be. Their horses were literally bone and skin, and looked as if bad treatment had been their lot. Each of the 142 Indians had a silver band round the hat, and some round the arms. They belonged to the Chocktaw tribe which hunted somewhere near Vicksburg, about 200 miles down the river, to which point they were now going.

The captain, most disreputably, charged them 49 dollars for their passage, showing thereby a greater love of the almighty dollar than he did of philanthropy or justice; this sum exhausted their stock of money which they had been some six months accumulating by the sale of skins, &c. Fifty dollars was the fare asked, but as they had no more than 49, the captain or clerk generously took it. The chief (a young and fine-looking man) payed it out royally without a murmur of dissent, counted it up in his fingers and then out of his skin-wallet, it was all in silver pieces, as they do not care for or take a note of any denomination as money. On some of the eastern railways the Indians are allowed to travel free, and the general feeling of the passengers was that of disgust at the cupidity of the captain,

Library of Congress

in charging those poor children of the wilderness 49 dollars for 143 a deck-transit down stream of twenty-four hours.

One evening with some others I went ashore, and for the first time stood in the cane-brake. Selecting some of the longest I cut them down, and found them to measure from 16 to 18 feet, supple as whalebone, and might be bent round without breaking. The timber here was very heavy indeed, yet from the mid-river it looked like a grove of saplings.

This evening, March 8th, 1849, we had an eclipse of the moon; the sky at sunset presented a most beautiful appearance, the intense, clear, blue vault being ribbed with some cloud-banks, which glowed with varying tints of much splendour. As to the breadth of this seemingly endless river, it must be at least a mile or more, in fact in many places it is certainly much more. The current has great strength, yet the surface is placid as a lake, save where a snag lifts its head above the water, when it foams past, indicating plainly its main speed. The sound of this rush in the water is that for which the steersman of the broad-horn 144 listens at night, when he can hear it plainly for some distance; sometimes he trains a dog which will sit on the bow and bark as soon as he hears the snag ripple. Those snags (which are old and large trees rooted in the bottom) will rip up a steamboat or broad-horn; they are most dangerous when their head is under water, because then they cannot be guarded against.

From Natches to Orleans the river seems to widen, and the houses of the planters assume a more imposing appearance, being on a larger scale and much superior in design to those higher up; they are commonly surrounded with orange-trees, live oak, or other no less beautiful shade; the dwelling-house is commonly surrounded by paling, and the Negro huts are ranged in the form of a street away from the house. The appearance of the cotton and sugar drills stretching away,—away to the back-woods straight as an arrow-flight, bespeaks at once the taste and labour employed.

Library of Congress

In some places the river had overflowed the levee, inundating the adjacent plantations for 145 miles. When a crevasse of this kind occurs, the losses of the planters are very heavy. The overflow was greater this season (1848) than it has been for years. There is a brim-flood in the river, where at the ordinary stage of water there is a bank of 30 feet. Approaching one of these crevasses at night we could hear the rush of the waters at a distance of four miles. It was quite a large one, and occurred on General Taylor's plantation. We had here an opportunity of experiencing the effect of a thunder-storm on the Mississippi, and I shall not readily forget its terrible beauty. A pitchy darkness enveloped the scene. Our boat was headed in-shore and made fast, when, bursting suddenly, the rain came down in torrents mingled with hail, while, ever and anon, the rolling, crashing thunder growled fearfully over the old forest, which echoed back its terrors; presently, the whole horizon would be lighted up by a flash of sheet-lightning, when the wide smoking river, the tall forests along the bank, islands, and sky, became distinct as in clear moonlight, only tinged by the peculiar and unearthly hue of the electricity. And then again, in the twinkling of an eye, all was as dark as Tartarus, so that you could not see your hand when you stretched it forth! Then, again, would forked and vivid lightnings dart through the gloom from the zenith, rifting, like reeds, the gigantic pine, or cotton wood. Lashed, in-shore, we lay in momentary suspense, but thanks to a benevolent Providence, within an hour the storm seemed to have spent itself, and rolled away, leaving us scathless to "proceed upon our way rejoicing."

No slight addition to the impressiveness of the scene was the fact that, in that fearful hour of elemental war, some of our number were rendering up their spirit to its Author, for the cholera was among us, and took off thirteen on our passage. Here, for the first time, I had an opportunity of seeing that fearful plague; and never can I forget the horror of the symptoms in a gentleman who slept next berth to me, and whom I had seen at night when retiring to rest. He was taken ill in the morning. I went in to see him, but could not recognise his features. Within two hours his eyes had sunk, and were surrounded by 147 a black ring; his cheeks were hollow, his nose sharp, and his tongue furred with a foetid

mucus; his limbs were wasted, and his hands a deep purply black. He seemed to suffer much from spasmodic cramping, and yet he appeared to possess his consciousness and memory, but his voice had sunk into a scarcely audible and indistinct whisper. In a few hours he was dead and buried. The mortality increased daily, and one saw the chair of his neighbour at breakfast empty at dinner hour, producing the death-expecting feeling of the battle-field, without the counteracting influence of its excitement. Some cases lasted ten hours, and one (a remarkably strong man) stood out thirty-seven. Our first death was among the emigrants in the lower deck, that of a poor fellow without friends or baggage. He was carried off in a few hours, and he was put ashore at midnight, and buried in the swamp (if a pit 14 inches deep could be called a grave) without a coffin, or ceremony. The sad sight so impressed me, that I gave vent to my feelings in the following verses, which have since been printed. H 2

148

THE EMIGRANT'S GRAVE.

'Twas night, on the banks of the wide Mississippi, The struggling stars glimmer'd deep in the wave, When in silence we dug 'neath the old dreamy forest, Amid the wild cane-brake, the wanderer's grave!

'Twas sad, on the bank of that lone distant river That the pilgrim should rest in his last dreamless sleep, No kindred to cheer his faint spirit at parting, Or the sweet tears of love o'er his ashes to weep.

In silence we laid him to sleep there for ever, O'er his head the red elm and tall cotton trees wave His requiem, the croak of the hoarse-throated swamp-toad, While the fire-flies in thousands illumined his grave.

Library of Congress

Unmarked was the spot where we laid the poor stranger, Unknown was his country, his kindred, or name. Oh! how long may some fond heart still pray for his coming And love build its altar on hope's hollow dream.

It is well, for perchance that fond heart would be blighted, Did it know that its loved one uncared for had died, And uncoffin'd now slept where the wave of the marsh flood Doth wash his cold brow with its pitiless tide.

Peace! peace to thine ashes, poor child of the East! As soundly thou sleepest within thy cold bed, As though thousands had fashioned thy chamber of rest And the drapings of woe o'er thy bier had been spread.

Thus, often may be seen advertisements in the various newspapers, from the friends of missing 149 persons, asking information respecting them, when the facts are, that they have long since found a nameless grave in the waters of the Mississippi, or the great valley of its course.

As well as the thunder-storm, there sometimes occurs a hurricane, which is fearful in its results. Once, in passing up the Ohio, I saw the track which a violent hurricane or tornado had taken a few hours previously; it had struck a hill on the north bank, which was thickly wooded for a width of a furlong, passing in a straight line to the brow. In this track, it had cut down every tree as thoroughly as if it had been chopped with the axe, and as straight as if a line had been cast to mark its boundary; coming down to the river, it had seized on, and twisted off the large trees on the bank, as if they had been dry reeds, scattering the trunks to every point of the compass; it seemed as though a legion of the powers of the air had charged across the hill, in close column, riding knee to knee, tramping down the opposing forest with reckless fury. Crossing the river, it had swept the brows of the southern shore, for a long distance, in an air-line, mowing down the heavy timber as grass falls before the scythe. When I looked upon the track of its ravage, I wished much to be

Library of Congress

near enough to hear the roar of that terrible tempest, and the snapping crash of the great trees as they groaned in the grasp of the whirlwind.

Baton Rouge, though not a large place, is well located, and appears well from the river; here is the residence of General Zachariah Taylor, the hero of Mexico. I had an opportunity of seeing him at Cincinnati, in February, 1849, on his way to Washington: he came up the river, attended by a flotilla of seven steamers, each of which had cannon mounted on the bows, which returned the salute thundered by the field-pieces on shore. The crowd was immense on the boats and shore, and the greatest enthusiasm pervaded the assembly. I had a good view of him as he passed to the carriage in waiting; he seemed about 5 feet 9 inches in height, and of sallow complexion, his hair was not of that venerable white which the popular portraits give him, 151 but rather of a dark iron-grey colour; his features had a settled severity of expression, and even when he smiled, it did not quite disappear; he seemed exhausted and weary of the *suaviter in modo*, which the sustained congratulations required him to assume. And, truly, it is no small tax to be famous, except where one's inviolability is preserved by the batons of policemen. The old man seemed to me more fitted for the camp-saddle than the presidential chair, and, I am confident, would feel more at home in the direction of a breaching battery, than in the deliberations of a council. No armed soldiers preserved the sanctity of his person, nor was the *cortège* hemmed in with flashing sabres, borne by moustachioed heroes, whose well-fed horses tramped unsparingly on the despised crowd, who pay heavily for the privilege. Seated in an open carriage, with the mayor and two others, the plainly-dressed citizen king was crowded round, spoken to, and welcomed, by his citizen-masters, with perfect freedom and impunity; nor was there any compromise of their dignity by that unseemly roaring 152 and cheering, whereby loyalty to crowns is so generally accompanied. Lewis Cass, who was the opposing candidate for the Presidency (on the democratic nomination, Taylor being the representative of the whigs), to whom I had an introduction in New York, seemed to me a man more naturally fitted for the office; his manner was polished, diplomatic, and dignified; he has a remarkably fine cast of head, and, altogether, seems

Library of Congress

to have the materials for a civil magistrate, while Taylor is a personification of the military leader. Cass's action, when ambassador to France, in relation to the quintuple treaty, may be taken as an instance of his capacity and spirit.

The planters on the coast (the lower part of the Mississippi banks, and as high as Baton Rouge, I think, is called the coast) are in the habit of burning the sugar-cane tops, and other brush, at certain seasons. Seen from the hurricane deck of the steamer, at night, when hundreds of acres are a sheet of wavy flame, realizing, in a degree, the appearance of a prairie fire,—the scene is strange and grand. The rich and deep colouring of the foliage, and 153 the peculiar grasses and wood of the tropics, are interesting to the traveller: there is the snakelike, tortuous, and drooping poison-tree; the huge cotton-wood and buck-thorn, laden with their drapery of Spanish moss; the tough, impenetrable cane-brake, the haunt of the bear, panther, and alligator; the large grasses, and fan-shaped reed-tufts,—all combining to fill a beautiful picture, in which must also be estimated strange and beautiful birds, among which the mocking- and hum ming-birds were numerous.

During a shooting-excursion in this section, I had the first opportunity of seeing that close shooting, which the western men are famous for with the rifle. I had a German double-barrelled gun, of large bore, and one of the party, who was my companion, was a “hoosier” (*i.e.* from Illinois state), having a heavy though not a long rifle. On coming to a bayou, I perceived a woodcock (not the Norwegian woodcock, but of the pigeon species), in the top of a cotton-wood tree. As I could not get within range, without wading, I asked my friend to fire at it, as, when on the wing, I should probably get the shot, if it did not H 5 154 fly in the opposite direction. I should think it was, at the time, 100 yards distant.

“Well,” said he, “if you give me the shot, I guess I can kill it.”

With a perfect confidence I said, “It is impossible, but, go ahead.” He raised his rifle slowly, awkwardly, and, without a rest, fired. There was a flutter among the Spanish moss, and,

the next moment, the bird came whirling down. I was perfectly amazed, and when he waded in (having long waterproof boots on) and brought out the bird, I found the head severed from the body. I told him plainly I looked upon it as a chance-shot, but he very quietly asked if I would bet 20 dollars on the next bird, about the same distance, which I did not, and acted wisely therein: but when he fired at that bird, I confess I thought he might as well have levelled at the man in the moon. The result of my *batteau* was a chameleon (alive), and a mocking-bird (defunct), which I was exceedingly sorry for having shot, when I discovered its species.

155

CHAPTER VIII. THE STAGE—AGAIN.

Arriving At the great end of travel, which is driving. Byron.

In a former chapter I alluded briefly to the stage-travelling in the east; but, owing to the misplacement of my notes, did not, as I had intended, include in that connection the present remarks, which would have been more desirable; but, as I have no doubt the indulgence of the reader has been called into action hitherto, I will not make the further mistake of a tedious apology; but, confessing my error, “go ahead!”

The conveyance which in the West conveys Uncle Sam's mail, and migratory nephews, is a commodious vehicle; differing altogether from the old English mail-coach. It has not the guard-seat behind, the double front-seat, fore 156 and back boot, solid panels, patent steel-springs, &c., but it has all that the nature of the ground and its uses require, and although a “rum one to look at,” is “a good one to go.” To proceed from the negative to a positive description, I have said they are commodious; some hold twelve persons, but usually they are made for nine (that is, inside); the body is slung on bands of strong leather instead of springs, which gives it a greater security and much more yielding motion, at the back is a tray, on which a large amount of baggage or mail can be deposited; this is covered by a heavy leather, apron, secured by straps, while in the front, under the

Library of Congress

driver's seat, is a well, in which the way-mail is usually carried; across the inside, opposite the door, is a movable seat, as a rest for the occupiers, of which a broad leather strap, hooks across; the sides, instead of being solidly panelled in the upper part, are covered by leather curtains, which can be raised in fine weather, and closed in cold or wet; the door has, like the English coach, a sliding window in the door; and now, having given you a sketch of the vehicle, let us proceed on the route. 157 They are usually drawn by four, but sometimes six horses. The usual stage is sixteen miles, but sometimes one team is driven twenty or twenty-two; and it is customary to give the horses at all seasons of the year, no matter what heat they may be in, plentiful drinks of cold water—which never fails to elicit an exclamation of horror from any ostler from the old country when he first sees it, before his faith in hot “meal and water” or “porter drinks” has been shaken. The drivers are usually civil; they change with the teams, and therefore are fond of their cattle, and take a pride in their appearance and properties. They drive well, or a little better, and know the capacity and temper of each horse thoroughly, and administer encouraging words or whip-cord most scientifically. They have not that detestable habit of touching the hat, which the Jehu of many capes accompanies with “your honour” when he sees a prospective half-crown in the person of a well-dressed passenger in the “rattling stage” of Old England. The American driver feels just as independent as the man he drives, and would look on the offer of money as 158 an insult rather than a favour. The coach-agents at the stage offices see to the baggage, and the passengers to themselves; and any attempt to put on aristocratic manners with the driver is a great mistake, never committed except by some “auld world” noody, or Broadway explorer of the West. Dickens, I think, speaks of being asked for money by a stage-driver, but he was a negro; and he unwittingly, as in many other matters, drew a general conclusion from a limited premiss. I must allege in reply, that I have travelled many thousand miles by stage over much of the Union, and I have never been asked or hinted at by a driver for remuneration. But let us proceed—as to driving, the American Jehu is certainly ahead of all others. He can and will drive over or through anything within the range of possibility, and sometimes I have seen a “fix,” out of which I fancied a corps of engineers would be required to extract us, but which yielded at length

Library of Congress

to horseflesh and fence-rails. If Phaeton had driven an Ohio stage for a year, mythology would be wanting in a very inflammatory incident, and mankind would not have had 159 that maxim to cogitate on, which says, “Medio tutissimus ibis;” yet, seeing that the world seems nothing the worse for the fire, and mankind is probably much better for the maxim, it is perhaps all as well that Phaeton was not hired out at twelve dollars a month by his cautious papa, and that the western ribbons remain in the fingers of mortal monarchs. Yet it sometimes happens that our modern princes, like their Olympian cousin, contrive to “spill” not one, but many suns (aye and daughters too), who, though not inflammable as their phonetic namesake, yet resemble him in the reverse, inasmuch as in their case an inflammation is caused, whereas in his we hear he caused an inflammation.

I have said the motion is more undulatory than that of the steel-spring coaches; this, however, although necessary, is not pleasant over a rough road, where the shaking is certainly awful (to use a not uncommonly expressed opinion); sometimes you hold on to the seat, else your hat will be mummyised against the roof, or you will be thrown in a most fraternal way over on your opposite neighbour; then you will find 160 your side sinking until the window seems to be getting into the bottom of the coach; and anon, you go up until you can see through the opposite window the chasms in the road. The probabilities of an upset are numerous, but there is also a provision made for the said probabilities, which provision is in the shape of an iron pin, called a crown pin, which keeps the body of the coach in its position on the frame under all ordinary oscillations, but which, when an overturn occurs, will fly out, letting the body roll off the leather bands; so that, unless the overturn takes place on the brink of a precipice, or the middle of a river, or anything of that sort, there is not much danger of life, though there may be of limb.

The philosophical patience with which Americans take those moving accidents by flood and field, reminds one of the Stoic of the olden time. For instance—when the roads are bad, it is usual for the passengers to get out and walk until the travel becomes better, and in case of the coach getting fixed (*i.e.* stuck up the hub in a stiff mud-rut, or heeled over), the common expedient is to get a fence rail, or two or three, and by a 161 judicious

Library of Congress

application of the lever power, and a vigorous use of the thong, the passengers and horses commonly get it all right again; but frequently the wheels require to be prized out so often, that, when the snake-fence is not at hand, a passenger carries a rail along on his shoulder, as a portable avail against an emergency.

An instance, however, is mentioned of an oversensitive hoosier, who had to walk for some ten or twelve miles with the mud half way up his cow-hide boots, and who had done good service with his rail, but who felt a little “riled, and a kind disposed to talk right eout about the darned thing,” and on coming into the village and proceeding to the coach-agent's office, threw down his pole indignantly, and addressing that functionary, said—

“You're agent, I guess?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Well, look here; I'm passenger by that stage, stranger! and I want to go back again to-morrow—but though I don't object to pay my fare and walk through, I'm consarned if I believe in having to carry a rail!”

162

Through many parts of the union there are lines of macadamised roadway, which are kept in tolerable order, and are moderately turnpiked, and when you strike into one of those roads from a cross-stage route, on which you have been pitching, diving, rolling, and wading for ten or twelve hours, you feel as if transferred from a patent churning machine into a rocking chair, or (to be Oriental), from the hump of a rough-trotting dromedary to the back of one of those golden-winged white camels which Mohammed has prepared (in promise) for the transportation of the souls of faithful Mussulmans into the felicities of his seventh paradise—you relax your muscles and fears, lie back luxuriantly in your seat, congratulate your fellow travellers, and, in short, feel, like Tam o' Shanter:—

“O'er all the ills of life victorious.”

Library of Congress

In Ohio, during the winter of 1849, I took the stage one morning, and happening to be the ninth man booked, contrived, after sundry gymnastic evolutions, to wedge myself between a rough blanket coat on the one side, and buffalo 163 skin on the other, each containing some one hundred and eighty pounds of solid humanity; the door was closed with a clasp, and off we rolled, getting shaken down into a good fit as we proceeded. An individual opposite me, with a very fat-looking fleecy coat, a ductile sombrero hat, a heavy beard, and a quick grey eye, that had been taking in the compact solidity of our position for some time, began as a general observation by remarking—

“We seem to be pretty well fitted, I expect?” and he looked at me as if he would say —“Don't you think so?”

I nodded a dubious affirmative, inasmuch as one of the elbows of the buffalo-skin was pressing right into my ribs, and the blanket-coat on the other side edging me off like a wedge, while the legs of the speaker were dovetailed with mine in a most firm if not very cramp dispelling manner.

“Well,” he continued, “I like to be packed always just so, and to have the middle seat,” (here he winked at me, as much as to say, I rather calculate there's only two other wise men in the coach). “Kase you see, when we upset 164 (this he looked upon as being part conjecture) there's no harm done except a bruise or so when you are in the middle, but the outsiders sometimes get it pretty bad.”

I assured my informant that I should always remember his philosophy in future drives, and I am convinced that all the good was not theoretical, neither is it eccentricity to take the last or second last coach in a railway-train, as a study of accidents will convince you when you take an average. The worst kind of stage-road is what is called a rail-road, viz., a number of logs laid parallel across a swamp, or bottom, over which the drive is a succession of jolt, jolt, jolt, and would most certainly be a good prescription to a dyspeptic patient, or one affected with ennui. By a judicious course or selection you can always find

Library of Congress

a good fund of information or amusement in a stage, but if not evoked, the journey may be passed in comparative silence, which is an American habit. I remember an incident related to me by a Philadelphia collector, who had been out to Terra Haute in Indiana, which, as illustrating the stage, I will relate. We were chatting 165 round the stove in a hotel in Ohio, and he having come over a route I had intended going, I was asking him about the roads.

"Well," said he, "they are not good; the water is ten feet deep over the national road in one part; I had to row it for one and a half miles in a skiff!"

I asked, "Was the wheeling bad?"

"Awful!" said he.

"Have you had many upsets?" I inquired.

"No," said he, with evident complacency; "we had only one."

"Any one hurt?" I suggested.

"Well, no! a little skeared, that's all."

"How did it occur?" said I.

"Well, you see," said he; "we had six inside, and a considerable mail; we got along pretty well though, until we came to the top of a long hill, rather sharp, too, at the bottom of which there was a narrow bridge, and right across the road the eastern mail was stuck fast, the fore-wheels were down to the axle, and the passengers were all out trying to prize it out; between the hinder wheels and the fence, there was a passage, but it 166 seemed too small to admit of our coach passing; as we approached one of the passengers called out to our driver—

Library of Congress

“Holloa, Captain, hitch on your team here, will you, and help us out, else you can't pass here.’

“Well, our driver was smart, I tell you, and he didn't a kind o'like the manner of this half request, half command, was given. And says he—

“‘I guess I can pass if I want to! so you just get out of the track.’

“‘Well then, I guess you wont,’ replied another of the passengers, a big hoosier, as he balanced his fence-rail as if he meant mischief; ‘so you'd better unyoke and haul us out; our team are clean give eout.’

“‘Gentlemen,’ said our driver, bending round to us; ‘will you get out, or stop in, just as you like, for I'm going to pass that critter, anyhow, though he does talk so darned big.’

“‘Pass,’ was the word unanimous; ‘we'll stop in and risk it,’ and taking in a long breath, each man held fast.

“The bridge was a narrow one-track one, with 167 a low parapet, and the banks of the road at the other side were high, and the coach was not more than twelve yards clear of the bridge. Well, sir, he gathered up his reins, gave a shout at the horses, at which the leaders jumped as if struck with a scourge, and with a furious cut or two to the wheelers, down we went on them at a gallop.

“‘Clear out there,’ shouted our Jehu, as he shot past the stranded vehicle, escaping it by a shadow, and crashing down a rod of the fence, a miraculously sharp turn, and over the bridge we spun, and, whew! right over we turned, but just in time to escape getting into the creek, and to be caught by the high-road bank. We jumped out, just pushed the body right into its place, while the driver very coolly unharnessing his horses, for the purpose of hauling out the disabled coach; ‘but’ said he, ‘I guess I made him streak when I wanted to pass; he couldn't stop me no how; and now I want to pull him out, and I'm a-going to,’ and

Library of Congress

accordingly he did so, sir," said my informant, "and then came and yoked up again, having evidenced, that he was at once a courageous and philanthropic man."

168

I have said that at times the company is interesting, in fact, nearly always so, if properly enjoyed; as a specimen, I would here insert a leaf or two from my way-book."

April 28th, 1849, left Cleveland, Ohio, for Pittsburg—full inside—(I mean the coach, as we started before breakfast)—the company less taciturn than Mrs. Trollope or Dickens happened to meet with. After the usual criticism on the weather had passed round, and the amount of acquaintance with the road by the company been ascertained, the probable health of the summer had been speculated on, and the particulars of a recent murder, and bank-failure investigated, we gradually paired off into conversational couples, and settled down to it steady. I had for my opponent, in seat as well as sentiment, a hard, deep-voiced, broad-headed, coarse-handed advocate of some strange belief which he called Christian—a compound of the leading doctrines of Socinus and Arius, superinduced on the belief of the followers of Wesley, and embellished with orientalisms from the Zanda Vesta and Koran, and all 169 harmoniously bound together by a species of logic which, though it might be pronounced heretical by Wheatly, was most undoubtedly considered infallible as arithmetic by the aforesaid polemic, whom I found to be, pro tem., a dealer in sheep, but whose ulterior destiny he concluded to be the ministry. Our discussion occupied some twenty miles, and five hours; and, on reaching the point where I turned off to the East, he was assuring me that my memory had played me false in a statement I had advanced, viz. that the magi, or sorcerers, sent for by Pharaoh, are reported to have changed their rods into serpents, and the waters into blood; and definitely decided, as a student of the Bible, that I was confounding Moses with the sorcerers of the valley of Egypt. Moreover, he regretted our separation, as he had, he assured me, intended to demonstrate that God had tangible parts, form, and definite location. The first is an index to the amount of his biblical study: the latter, to the grossly materialized views which he entertained. And the greatest joke was the I 170 senatorial gravity with which he would diverge from an

Library of Congress

harangue, to pass an opinion on the marketable value of any flocks or herds we happened to pass, and also the swathing his gladiatorial neck in a white handkerchief as a licence for the advancement of the platitudes that comprized his—ism.

At Cayhoaga we changed coaches and horses. My quondam *compagnons de voyage* going on to Akron, while two ladies were my only associates as we proceeded to Pittsburg. One of the ladies was of that peculiar age that may be either thirty-five or forty-five, according to the temper, health, &c. of the party: the other was about nineteen or twenty. The former was prim, precise and acquiescent: the latter, to use a Hebraism, fair to look upon—vivacious, but withall proud, very proud; in fact, haughty is the best term for her manner. For some time I made cursory readings on the facial index of both; and having added to this my phrenological conclusions, broke a silent spell by a bold dart at the old lady with respect to the possibility of rain. The course once 171 opened, we kept a neck-and-neck canter of localisms. So having thus secured the elder, I alluded next to a discussion which had occurred in the coach I had left, rightly concluding such a topic to be the key to the younger lady's volubility, as she had taken little pains to conceal her contempt for the ordinary truisms of her (as I supposed) mother and myself. I had concluded thus because her temperament was fine: she had large causality, comparison and wit, added to which she had that wearing away about the eye that usually denotes the laborious student. I had struck the right chord; as soon as I mentioned a discussion, she condescended to enquire what was the subject? I briefly stated the leading points—speaking of my part in the third person. She thereupon made some pertinent remarks, and I was inwardly pleased to find she endorsed that side which had claimed me as an advocate. This led to a wider field; and our remarks fell amongst other things on national characteristics; and making a hazardous guess, founded on a certain angularity of the I 2 172 cheek-bone, and other data, I said boldly that I would judge her to be of French descent. She looked surprised; and said it was very strange I should say so, but that her grandmother was from Lorraine, and requested to know how I had concluded so. Assuming the Theban, I replied that I had based my remark on observation, and drawn my

Library of Congress

conclusion from many data, which were to be found classified in the systems of Lavater and Spurzheim and Gall. This hit in physiognomy drew on the subject of phrenology, and she would have me tell her, in proof, her character. As a single mistake would ruin me, I was cautious and general in my remarks. I told her she seemed to have studied more than ladies generally do—was most interested in the higher branches of study—was probably proficient in music, and most certainly fond of melody—had an excellent memory of events, possessed considerable artistic talent, and had a facility in acquiring language and remembering words, with other salient traits which her formation evidenced. Among the most prominent was the leading one which I first hesitate 173 to mention, but at length had the courage to tell her, viz. that her self-regard, or pride, was a prevailing trait in her character. As our conversation proceeded, she laid aside her *hauteur*, and appeared what she really was—an amiable and well-informed lady—proving the truth of that couplet which says,

“But your cold people are beyond all price, When once you've broken their confounded ice.”

It appeared that she had graduated at Oberlin College, where she had, with seven other ladies, matriculated; the course had consisted of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, geometry, music, drawing, logic, arithmetic, theology, &c., twenty three had commenced the course, but only seven had succeeded in persevering. I had learned the particulars of this establishment in the previous winter from a student who had matriculated there, and whose acquaintance I made travelling across the northern spurs of the Alleghanies, so that I felt at home in treating of their peculiarities of belief, discipline, &c., and of course I dissented from much of both to draw out my fair opponent. 174 Then ensued quite an amusing scene: I found the old lady a powerful auxiliary, and as she constituted the audience, I paid court to her decision, so that she always came in with an emphatic echo to all my conclusions. To the no small annoyance of my pretty, though Quixotic, antagonist, she advocated the use of cold water only, and grain and vegetable food; condemned tea, coffee, wine, spirits, and flesh meats, as most pernicious; would have no parties of pleasure, or meetings, except

Library of Congress

for religious purposes; would restrict the hours of sleep, and increase those of study and labour; in fact, Lycurgus, Hahnemann, and Thompson, were her oracles, to all and sundry of which, my auxiliary,—who evidently liked a good cup of tea and roast turkey for dinner, nor would become hysteric at the sight of a glass of sherry or mulled port on a cold night,—gave an emphatic dissent. She did not like the newfangled notions of the folks now-a-days, and wondered how the people continued to live before these inventions came out, and the 175 world was getting worse all the time for all the philosophy and reform; for her part, she liked the good old way of living, and did not believe in the notions and vagaries that carried people away now-a-days. This was the answer to an appeal I had made to her decision on one of the points in question; in fact, whenever she got a chance to take hold of any of the young lady's notions she showed it just as much mercy as Bonner would to a Lutheran. I had kept on the frontier of the question, now inclining one way, and now another, but always leaning most to the old lady, so that I doubt not my fair friend thought me well within the range of conversion but for my bulwark in the black silk and green veil.

By night-fall we reached the village where we were to have supper and change horses. When I prepared, after supper, to hand in the ladies, I was surprised to find that only the young one appeared, and I learned that the elder lady was neither her duenna nor mamma, but merely a fellow-traveller, and that we 176 were to travel the remainder of the night alone. It was a beautiful moonlight, and the air balmy and dry, so as to admit of the windows being down; at first I felt the absence of my friend in the green veil as a loss, and remarked that I was sorry that our friend had not come further on our way; she replied with great *naïveté*.

“Indeed, I suppose you are, as you could not fail to appreciate her judicious opinions and unprejudiced judgment in our evening's discourse.”

There was an ironical emphasis on the “judicious,” and “unprejudiced.”

Library of Congress

Thinking it safe to retreat a degree, I proved as false to my former ally as did the Pope to Napoleon, but yet was only true to my convictions in replying, that although the lady's judgments had been "judicious," yet I did not believe it to have been very comprehensive; notwithstanding, I had thought her remarks generally sound, and certainly, discriminating.

177

"Oh! yes," said she, smiling, "I should think you ought to consider her judgment sound and discriminating, as I observed, whatever you said she applauded; but I am sorry I cannot sympathise in your regret, for I am very glad we got rid of her."

The night was cloudless, and a beautiful moon sailed calmly in the firmament inviting the reflection and the fancy to her sphere. From the pale orb we wandered through the planets and fixed stars, and those countless myriads of systems that are scattered like diamond dust on the black ground of the heavens, and I found we agreed much better on celestial topics than we had on terrestrial. Perhaps the absence of a third party contributed to this end, for we chatted away like old friends, and I found her mind to be stored with quaint and antique images of thought blended with treasures of solid and valuable learning, and it was strange to see the studious and terse manner of the hard reader blended with the gushes of the tenderness of woman. Many of her opinions on spiritual I 5 178 matters were really peculiar. With Milton she held that we are surrounded by the spirits of the departed, that—

"Millions of disembodied spirits walk this earth, Both when we sleep and when we are awake,"

and had studied Swedenborg to borrow some of his transcendental idealisms; but would not endorse Tupper in the extravagance that the moon is the—

"Hell, where earthly souls are punished."

Her acquaintance with the world was only through books. She had never been to a city or seen the ocean, but the sublimity of her conceptions of the latter I cannot now record.

Her history it is well to briefly state. Her mother had died when she was seven years old, leaving her and two brothers: the elder was a missionary at Siam, the younger she prepared for college. She taught a school of some fourteen young ladies, and had now been to visit her father, an old man, with whom her younger brother lived. I jocosely asked if her culinary knowledge was as perfect as her conjugations, or if she could make 179 a pattie as well as she solved a problem. She laughingly assured me that she was proficient in the mysteries of corn-bread, pumpkin pie, preserves, and pickles—had often marshalled her household before she arranged one of Homer's legions, and associated Cicero "De Oratore" with the renovation of the domestic wardrobe. In short, I will say that in no part of the world which I have been in did I meet a more refined, intellectual woman, than that daughter of the American backwoods, before whom many a jewelled brow in kingly courts would shrink in conscious inferiority. And it is amongst the pleasantest reminiscences of my life that when in the grey dawn of the morning she got out at her destination—there was that in the tone of her farewell which evidenced at least that she had appreciated any effort I had made to lighten the tedium of the journey. During the remainder of my way I often thought what a pity that such abilities and gifts should be secluded thus; but then again I would think that Massinger when writing his play of the "Hunchback," fancied no fictitious possibility when he shows how the rural paragon 180 may become a frivolous pleasure-seeking, good-for-nothing city dame.

In any case I cannot do the reader who has come this far a greater favour than to hope, should he ever be booked inside of a western stage, that he may be associated as fortunately as the writer was; and that if booked for a passage in the stage of life with such a companion he will be the possessor of a treasure richer than Cyrus, and as near an approach to Adam's as this century can afford.

181

CHAPTER IX. THE ALLEGHANIES.—HARPER'S FERRY.—PHILADELPHIA.

For now my way I wend Amid wild mountain peaks, all grand and strange. Lambay.

Library of Congress

Or where through the blue mountain range is cleft, That grand and awful gap—down from the peak To their deep granite roots, all torn and reft, With huge and frowning crags, that grimly speak The story of that fearful crash which left Its record writ in jagged rocks.—The freak Of the fierce earthquake's power, where now in beauty flow The mingled Potomac and Shenanadoah. Ibid.

For some hours in the succeeding part of that day's journey I felt more inclined to look in on the memory of my late fellow-traveller than to look out of the window on the scenery we passed. At midday we reached Beaver, a thriving village on the confluence of Beaver Creek with the Ohio. As you approach the village the road winds 182 round, and down a steep hill; and below you see through the tree-tops a valley of great beauty. It runs up for some five or six miles before it is hugged by the mountains; its width may not be more than three or four hundred yards. It is dotted with little cottages, and enclosed fields; through the centre runs a small sparkling stream, while up at each side slope the wooded mountains against the clear sky, forming no inapt reality to that happy valley which the defender of the "Cock Lane Ghost" has imagined in his beautiful tale of "Rasselas."

In sooth, I marvel not that the Red Man loved his country so undyingly, and hated with such a quenchless hatred the pale face that came to drive him from the possession of such fairy spots as that which lay beneath the eye. Fancy can perceive in that luxurious bottom, some fifty summers ago,—the wigwams of a great tribe; around the lodges the squaws sat caressing their swathed papoose; and round upon the sward ran and rolled the elder children, while out upon the mountains the forest sagamores and the young men hunted the red deer, the panther, and the 183 bear, returning at night to feast on their spoils, smoke over the past, and teach the lessons of endurance and bravery to their children, which they had learned from their fathers. But endurance and bravery were no protection. The scalps of the pale face were numerous as the wood-pigeons when the leaves wither, but against the maddening fire-water, and the deadly rifle, the medicines and the bow were no protection. And so it is that the Red Man, according to his faith, has

Library of Congress

passed away to the happy hunting-grounds of his fathers, where the Manitou smiles for ever on his red children, and where the footstep of the pale face leaves no trail upon the grass.

At Beaver we found a steamer waiting our arrival (in this case you must understand me as giving a personality to the mail), and getting aboard, away we went up the O,hi,ô; and well, indeed, has it been named by our discriminating neighbours *La Belle Rivière*, for it is, indeed, most beautiful. Fastidious as my eye had become from an uninterrupted acquaintance with forest and hill, yet withal I sat rapt in silent admiration until evening, looking on those lovely banks which as they 184 still unrolled before me seemed more like those realms of faery land which we dream of in our childhood than the real scenes of our common place, matter-of-fact planet.

We arrived at Pittsburg about six o'clock. The city is seated on a gradually rising ground, bounded on either side by the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers, which here join, forming the headwaters of the Ohio. The present town occupies the site of the fort Du Quesne, of which, however, no trace seems now to remain. Pittsburg is called the Birmingham of America; and truly, if smoke, iron, and business, make up the likeness, the name is not misapplied. The coal which abounds in the vicinity is bituminous, and gives a dingy look and peculiar smell to every thing and place in the city,—in fact, when you have walked away from the levee, so as to lose sight of the steamers, you could without any effort fancy yourself in an English manufacturing town. On the opposite banks of either river are two other towns, Alleghany City, and Birmingham. There is a magnificent connecting wire-bridge (which is a suspension though buttressed), connecting the latter 185 with Pittsburg, and from the bluff at the Birmingham side a grand panoramic view of the country may be had for miles. The three cities are beneath you, like a mass, except that the carts and people, reduced to atomies, move about. And the three rivers can be traced for miles, winding amid the champaign, while the scene is shut in in the distance by seemingly unbroken and variously tinted forests; and you are reminded only of man and civilization by casting your eyes below, or the incessant ring of the forgers' hammer “closing rivets

Library of Congress

up;" or mayhap it may so fall out that such an intimation is given by the index of your watch, seconded by a stomachic remembrance of the hour wherein mine host of the St. Charles furnishes forth "ye goodlie dinner" from his excellent larder.

From Pittsburg I proceeded to Brownsville, some sixty miles up the Monongehala, passing on the way the scene of Braddock's defeat and death. It would perhaps be monotonous to the reader to revert to the scenery of the Monongahela, however its beauties may be comprehended in a phrase. They fully stand the test which 186 the eye applies, even on coming out of the Ohio. At Brownsville, about half-past six o'clock, A.M. we took a miserable breakfast, the quality of which did not appear in the bill. Mustering a company of two ladies and seven gentlemen, we procured an accommodation stage, and commenced an ascent of the out-spurs of the Alleghanies. The most peculiar and well-defined character in our company was a Kentuckian, who kept up during the journey the spirits and conversation of the party, which wanted some such, the day being one of incessant and heavy rain. He spoke loud and clear, and had a habit of pronouncing the letter e, as an a; for instance, there he pronounced thar; bear, bar; where, whar; &c. He commenced, on taking his seat, to state his peculiarities of temper and taste; said he could bear anything in creation but peace and quietness; that he never had been over that road; that he had not riled up; pronounced the possibility of keeping his temper until we came to Laurel Hill (where there is a continuous ascent of five miles), but that "thar he was sure to git awful." All this and much more was delivered with 187 a comic seriousness, which reminded me of that story which Lever tells of the old gentleman who frightened a suspected fellow-traveller outside of the mail coach on a wet night, by pretending to be a lunatic addicted to biting. But as the Kentuckian had ample room for his large proportions, he evidently had no such intentions on the nervousness of the party, but merely wished to give vent to an exuberant overflow of animal spirits, which he in nowise allayed by a habit he had of getting out at every tavern, and pressing the males to drink all round. In an account of a tour he had made in the Canadas, he was describing a storm on Lake Ontario, in which he happened to be caught; he became quite eloquent, but having

Library of Congress

come as far as the appearance of the foam-crested waves, he was puzzled for a simile sufficiently oceanic for his memory of the scene; and paused, "It looked like," he continued, "like," and his comparison laboured, "like, boiling soap-suds, ten feet high. And I tell you, stranger, I would have felt skeared, only the captain assured me we had a sound hull, and no bottom."

188

At the distance of some sixteen miles, I think, we commenced the ascent of the main chain, and here the scenery assumed a grandeur and sublimity rarely equalled, at each winding of the road the champaign became more and more unrolled to the eye; and the immediate scenery more grand and wild. We met on the way and passed many stage-waggon, which are immense machines laden with merchandise, and drawn by six or eight strong horses, like those Flanders dray-horses, which, elephant-like, you see on the docks at Liverpool. At certain points the road wound round, and hung upon the brow of the mountain, so that down on the right lay the valley; and down, down through the tops of the pine trees, that clung to the side of the mountain, could be seen patches of clearing in the luxuriant bottom, where, some hardy solitude-loving pioneers had settled, while a winding river, like a streak of molten silver, appeared twining through the depths of the ravine. Looking up on the left, the mighty hill still rose against the heavens, while, far as the eye could sweep, mountains lifted up their forest-heads in silent and inspiring 189 grandeur; it was a sublime scene thus to gaze out upon an undulating plain of mountain-heads.

We were literally in the bosom of the Alleghanies, one of the most romantic, grand and beautiful scenes on the surface of our globe. For seventy-three miles we wound our way through this vast chain of northern Andes, and at two o'clock next morning arrived at Cumberland. When we came to the descending part, our driver made amends for the tedious ascent, by putting us through with a speed not far removed from twelve miles an hour. I should have mentioned, that before reaching the summit of the Laurel Mountain, we passed Braddock's Grave: it is in a little old orchard to the left of the road, and is a severe lesson on egotism; of his bravery no doubt can exist—of his pride that grave is

Library of Congress

a proof. Had he listened to the prudent suggestions of young George Washington, and not attempted to march through an Indian country as he would have done in Lombardy or Holland, he would not only have saved his own life, but also the lives of those brave men who fell by his vanity. 190 It is this faculty of adapting the means to the circumstance that marks the general. Napoleon did not meet the Mamelukes as he did the Austrians. What would have been right against Wurmser, or Prince Charles would have been madness against Murad Bey; but Braddock, like Murat, though a brave man and a good soldier, had not those elements which constitute a great or even a good general. There is much truth in the right understanding of the old proverb which recommends "When in Rome, to do as the Romans do;" and there is wisdom in acting on the maxim, when such action involves no greater sacrifice than our pride, vanity or prejudice.

The date of Braddock's defeat and death is July 9th, 1755. Between the ranges of the Alleghany and Blue Mountains is a basin or valley, of surpassing richness and fertility: its extent in length may be from five to six or seven hundred, its breadth from twenty to thirty miles. It is principally settled by Germans, who with their characteristic shrewdness in agricultural judgment, chose it in preference 191 to any of the lands on the eastern or western slopes of the boundary chains. In fact, I think the observation may be held as general, that the Germans have colonized principally, if not always, in the best lands which any section of the Union affords. Sleeping at Cumberland over night, we proceeded the next morning at eight o'clock by the railway to Baltimore. The line, of road follows the course of the Potomac, which winds through a valley of such surpassing loveliness that no description can convey even a skeleton idea of its beauty. Each successive view brought out by the windings of the vale seeming still the most lovely, until finally one sate still in silent enjoyment not taxing the comparative or critical powers of the mind, but passively drinking in the Eden-like scene. But it struck me as an exception to the general rule (at least, general in the more north-eastern states, as also in the middle) that there were no saw-mills or flour-mills, or other machinery houses on the river, which certainly could not have flowed in half the strength or capacity in New York, Massachussets, or Ohio, without

Library of Congress

192 having its waters arrested by mill-dams every mile of its course. At about one o'clock we reached that point where the waters of the Potomac and Shanandoah joining, pass through the Blue Mountain ridge—the place is called Harper's Ferry.

This scene I had imagined much and highly of, from Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia;" in which he pronounces it worth a voyage across the Atlantic to visit. He wrote when the place was as Nature made it; but even now, when man has pitched his tent there, and thrown his iron road across the river, and through the mighty jaws of the gaping chasm, still the scene is—for wild grandeur and rugged sublimity—unsurpassed; and equal to any idea that the most imaginative may form of its pretensions to the picturesque, grand, and wonderful. The cause of this mighty cleft may have been either of two, viz. : it may have been the work of an earthquake—or that, originally the chain being perfect, the vast basin now drained may have been a vast body of water, where, owing to a weakness in this particular point, from the formation or otherwise, it burst 193 its way through, tearing its passage to the ocean with the violence which has left its trace on the fractured brows of the gorge.

The motto, at the head of this chapter, embraces the former opinion; but the observer will find foundations for either theory in an examination of the place. There is at present quite a village there, and the United States have rather an extensive armoury there also. Coal seemed very abundant in the mountains between Brownsville and Cumberland; in many places huge boulders protruded from the mountain sides, overhanging the road.

From Harper's Ferry we swept through a beautiful country—the view approaching Baltimore is exceedingly fine, and the city (being the third or fourth largest in the Union) is very beautiful; it is situated on a rising and uneven ground, which has given some fine building-sites. The public buildings are very fine; and many of the private residences in the upper part of the town will compare with those of Chestnut-street, Philadelphia, or Fifth-avenue, New York.

Library of Congress

The Washington monument is a chaste and beautiful structure, some two hundred and eighteen feet high, from the top of which may be had a splendid bird's-eye view of the city and surrounding country, and also of the Patapsco Bay, on which the city is seated, and which opens on that of the Chesapeake. There is another monument which, though smaller, is of an exquisite design, to represent that which its name implies "Battle Monument," in consequence of which, and others, Baltimore is called the Monumental City. At the quays may be seen crowds of the celebrated Baltimore clippers, which have been so long considered a proverb of fast sailing; but report speaks of the Bostonians now professing to equal, in speed and construction, nay even to surpass those justly celebrated skimmers of the wave.

Leaving Baltimore at eight o'clock in the evening, you cross the Susquehanna, and reach Philadelphia by two o'clock in the morning. The stillness of the Quaker city as she slept in the moonlight was such that one might fancy oneself a rambler in that petrified city, which is spoken of in the traditionary tales of Persia: but in three hours more, those silent streets will be the channels for a flood of restless, rushing, money-seeking men; many of whose sleeping brains, even now pulsated with satisfaction over visionary gains, or sorrowed over their phantom losses.

The first thing that strikes the stranger in Tulada is the right-angled position of the streets, and you are apt to compare it with the tortuosities of London, or the twining labyrinths of some of the *quartiers* of Paris, or the winding streets to be found in the southern parts of New York. For a while this is well enough, but after a day or two you begin to feel that a little puzzle would be a luxury,—just try—make an attempt to lose yourself—you can't accomplish anything of the sort, try as you will. You have formed a deep stratagem and will be sure of success this time. You go into one of the parks, walk round once or twice, and strike out at a peakish angle without taking any notice of the locality; you walk right on, and after some fifteen minutes feel an inward satisfaction that you have succeeded at last in losing your way; but, on looking up at the next crossing, find you K 2 196 are

Library of Congress

hopelessly familiar with the corner of Fourth and Walnut. There is less of fever in the mercantile community here than in New York; the habits are more staid, and consequently respectable, than their driving, go-a-head, flashy, dollar-and-cent-worshipping opponents.

The charitable, intellectual, and religious edifices are numerous and unostentatious, and the public buildings elegant and in keeping. The Franklin library is a venerable, quiet, learned-looking place, on an inspection of whose tomes Dominie Sampson most certainly would exclaim "prodigious?!"

There is also the Philosophical Society, to which and other city notorieties, I feel indebted for the introduction to Mr. Job Tyson, a gentleman who has elaborated some most interesting historical reflections on the Indian races, and early history of Pennsylvania. In the chambers of the Philosophical Institute (the librarian of which, by the way, is one of the most eminent of American archeologists and linguists) is the: veritable chair with a portable desk on the right arm, in which sat the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. As I sat within its embrace, and 197 reflected on the sequences which had flowed, were flowing, and will flow for ever from that the most important document and true palladium of liberty that ever proceeded from the mind of man, I felt a thrill of pleasure shoot along my nerves, not unmixed with a feeling of reverential awe.

In the same building is the hall or room in which the Declaration of Independence was adopted. On the ceiling is emblazoned the original "old thirteen" stars, and the general appearance is religiously preserved the same as on that memorable day.: You feel strangely impressed as you find yourself within its sacred walls, and look round on its historical localities. There is the door from which the decision was read to the citizens assembled in the park, and above is the old bell whose prophetic inscription was in that hour fulfilled, and, according to its legend, it "proclaimed freedom throughout the land and to all the dwellers therein."

The Fainant water-works, from which the city is supplied, are beautifully laid out and peculiar in construction. The waters of the 198 Skuylkill are dammed across, and by its fall is made to revolve a set of water-wheels, to which are attached forcing pumps, by which the necessary amount of water is carried to a reservoir on the top of a hill, giving it the requisite elevation for feeding the city, and where it is purified before it is drawn off, in a succession of artificial basins.

Having said so much about rivers, I will not dwell on the beauties of the Skuylkill further than to say that the visitor of Philadelphia who does not wander on its banks will miss a delight he would find it difficult to equal. As places of interest and information, the alms-house, the mint, Girard college, and the prison, are each worthy of a visit; however the details, if attempted, would call for too much space to allow their insertion here, so we will proceed by a general chapter on many heads.

199

CHAPTER X. A CHAPTER OF MANY HEADS.

Again I'm off, into a disquisition, Leaving a while the burden of my theme. Sometimes I find my muse hath disposition To prate of matters which can scarcely seem Within the province of an exposition Such as the present: which I rather deem An illustrated guide-book to avail Your memory, should you ever strike my trail. Lamday.

Many heads! somehow this has a sanguinary sound; one, at which the mind reverts to those three pages in the history of France written by Robespierre and his abettors, which is literally a fearful and bloody record! a chapter of many heads! And the gloomy old Tower of London, and the citadel of Cairo, and a thousand other less famous places, furnish history with chapters and pages of many heads. But the heads of this 200 chapter, unlike most of those mentioned, are heads of subjects, which are descriptively detached from the body of the narrative, that it may in the future proceed without any unnecessary, encephalic encumbrance. To commence with money (which most of the

Library of Congress

smaller merchants here do not), it seems to me that the whole system of paper currency wants remodelling; but the worst of it is, that commonly every desirable reform is made political capital of, and consequently will be opposed by the opposition, no matter how well it stands on its own merits. Not keeping this fact in view, European journalists and travellers take the newspaper character of the whigs given by the democrats, and consequently think that one half the nation are unprincipled villains. Another takes the character of the democrats from the newspapers of the whigs, and accordingly concludes that the other half are unprincipled villains. But the fact is, that neither is to be believed, and the true national character is best estimated by taking the account of each party given of itself, which is much nearer the truth than the opposites as 201 given by their opponents. But it seems that some such system of bank notes as I was about to speak of, was, some years since, defeated by political differences, to the great prejudice of the body politic. But I will not enter into a review of Biddell cotton-speculation, and old Hickery will merely say that the result was, that, instead of having one grand central national bank, the notes of which would be so made and engraved, that counterfeit (even by the smartest nephew of Uncle Sam) would be impossible; which notes would have a permanent, unalterable value from Maine to Florida, and from San Francisco to New York, with which all would be acquainted, and security, engendered. There is, instead of this, a multitude of banks in every state (with a few exceptions where they are all burst up) each issuing its own paper, (and each having as many counterfeits almost as genuine bills), which paper, though it be genuine, is at a discount in the neighbouring state. Thus a dollar-bill worth 100 cents in New York state, is worth but from 98 to 99 in St. Louis; and a Tennessee dollar-bill worth 100 cents in Nashville, is worth but 90 K 5 202 in New York. And not only have you to guard against forgeries, but also against failures, for which you have to make daily reference to books called detectors, furnished with tables, and published for that purpose. The result is, as it once happened to me in Ohio, that I retired to rest with some veritable 59 dollar-bills in my purse, which, on the morrow were worth only 50 cents to the dollar, and which in a short time after, were worth but 25; reminding me forcibly of that tale in the Arabian Nights, where fairy treasure possessed by the sleeper over night, was found in the

Library of Congress

morning to be a parcel of dry leaves. But fearing lest you should consider the same of my details, I will pass to the consideration of quite another species of bills, namely, those of the musquito,—the musquito! that pertinacious torturer to all new-comers, which one can talk about calmly only in winter, and which puzzles one in summer to think what its office is in the great emporium; and surely its office must be an important one, to overshadow the amount of annoyance which it inflicts on creation's king. It is a small, dust-coloured fly with a long wasp-shaped 203 shaped body, provided with a very powerful boring and sucking apparatus, with which it phlebotomises most skilfully. It regales with greatest gusto on soft skins and rosy cheeks, but in the absence of those, is philosophical enough to content itself with the sear and yellow leaves of the human tree. Like the ghulo, they choose the night to feast in, and in the morning may be seen clinging, as rotund as an alderman, to the ceiling or walls of the room; and in the morning, likewise, may be seen your own face presenting an appearance somewhat like an incipient attack of measles, where the poisonous vampires have been carousing all night on your vital fluid. They usually sound an attack, making a buzzing noise, which some think is produced by the rapid action of the wings; but this I dissent from, as I have seen them fly without the peculiar noise being produced. No, but perhaps, in their restricted calculations, they imagine that they hereby bind their victim in a sounder slumber, or perhaps it is the Marseillaise of their nation; or perhaps like the Chinese, they think that noise is music, and accordingly buzz; or 204 perhaps they buzz because they like it, though you may not; however, they do buzz most annoyingly. The blister raised by their bite increases in size if you rub it, and it is no small matter to keep from doing so. The open windows are usually netted, and over the bed is fixed a musquito bar, consisting of a large sheet of strong bobbin net, sometimes white, and often of various other colours. In some cases it is suspended from a ring in the ceiling, letting it fall like a tent over the bed; another plan is to suspend it from a pole at the head of the couch, but the general plan is to spread it over the four posts of the bed-frame. But let us review the process of gaining its protection. Before going to bed you set your lamp on the table, and taking the towel, your handkerchief, or other convenient weapon, you commence a vigorous havoc on all musquitoes visible or audible; while so engaged your

Library of Congress

appearance to any person in the apartment over the way would lead to a supposition of lunacy, or the rehearsal of a stump-speech. Having ended the campaign, you sit down with the pleasant reflection of having done a good 205 action, and you feel that you could, from your heart, exculpate Domitian from the charge of cruelty if he had amused himself on mosquitoes; and let the next translator of Plutarch keep this in mind. You next look carefully within the net to see that no enemy has secreted himself within the citadel, then blowing out your lamp, you rapidly raise one corner of the bar and perform a harlequin dive into bed, letting down, and tucking in the net as quickly as possible, and placidly composing yourself, you repeat the first lines of Young's "Night Thoughts,"

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

and begin to speculate as to how the passage would have run, had he written his lucubrations in a mosquito country, when your meditations are interrupted by the well-known buzz, buzz, buzz, and you chuckle and hug yourself at the idea of how disappointed that same blood-loving gentleman will feel when he finds himself at the wrong side of the net,—ha! ha! he will have to feast on imaginary sweets to night. What! no, it can't be possible! it is a fact! he is inside the bar! horrible, yes, his very buzz has irony in it; 206 he is hoping you made a thorough search before you lay down, or asking, "won't you get up and relight your lamp?" or laughing at your oversight of him, as well and merrily as he is able. Ha! he is descending,—you steal your hands softly from under the coverlid, and just as he seems within an inch of your nose, you make a sudden clap at him with a force sufficient to injure his health for the season, and all is still. Not doubting that he is disposed of, you recompose yourself, when once more buzz, buzz, there goes the villain again, merry as ever. You determine to let him alight this time, and just as you feel his tiny limbs on your cheek, and fancy you feel his proboscis boring you, you apply a vigorous slap to your unoffending face, which, while it considerably increases the circulation, seems also to increase the ire of your tormentor, who seems to be a perfect ventriloquist, and very sharp-eyed, else you would have slain him a dozen times. At length, in despair, you cover all but your mouth in the sheet, and resign yourself to your fate, and when in the

Library of Congress

morning you consult your mirror, you find your visage presenting 207 an appearance which any ordinary quack might pronounce small-pox, and yet retain his character. And speaking of quacks, the amount of worthless nostrums sold in the States is incredible, and the rapidity with which fortunes are amassed by a popular pill or extract, is fabulous, and of an amount too, which regular practitioners never dream of, or have a chance of amassing. In fact the number of gentlemen engaged in the professions of law and physic is sufficient to create dissension and disease in a community ten times the size of even this great union.

The law-courts are truly democratic in the first glance of the stranger's eye, who has been accustomed to see law dispensed with the auxiliaries of horse-hair, ermine and policemen. There is no dock with spiked bar, nor crier up in a pulpit, nor council with flowing robes, high wigs and plethoric bags. In the city hall, at New York, I entered one of the courts, consisting of a large room with an elevated seat at one end, on which was seated an ordinary looking gentleman dressed in plain clothes, while other similarly dressed gentlemen occupied arm-chairs, their legs and arms, disposed 208 in every conceivable attitude. It was the criminal court; a railing ran across the room, outside which were benches for the people; at a table were seated the lawyers in the cause, and the jury at one side in twelve chairs. At the bottom of the table sat the prisoner, a woman charged with the murder of her child. She was seated next her council, and but that I enquired, I should not have known she was the prisoner. The prosecution by the attorney-general was lucid, forcible, but tinted with mercy; not that ferocious blood-hound-like tenacity with which I have heard royal attorney-generals hunt down and pant after the life of an unfortunate criminal. The replies of the defence were calm, though well supported and pathetic. The attorney-general did not avail himself of a reply, so the case passed into the hands of the judge, who put it to the jury in a refined, clear, legal, yet merciful charge. The jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict of "not guilty." It was a thing of beauty to see those men, who, while scrupulously upholding justice, still leaned to the side of mercy. How well has the poet said—

“Human power doth there seem likest God's When mercy seasons justice.”

The woman was about forty years of age, sallow and sharp-featured; she was dressed in black, and showed no signs of excitement, though evidently much impressed by the solemnity of her position; she sat perfectly moveless, and two others of her children were at her knees, playing with her fingers, and laughing as if it were a merry thing to be there. In the course of the evidence, her child's skull was produced, but she never moved a muscle; but when her council multiplied, and recapitulated the arguments in her defence, she looked so thankfully at him, and the tears came but in the judge's charge, though on every word hung life or death, she looked so vacantly, that I don't think she heard a word.

In another court where the jury had desks, it was quite amusing to see the result of the whittling propensity; the desks were cut right through, carved away in all kinds of fantastic gaps and holes. This was a place of prosy cases, and the judge came down from his seat, and walked 210 about occasionally, while a very long-winded advocate put forth his powers.

But in the Common Pleas, the richest specimen of burlesque oratory may be enjoyed. I subjoin an extract, which many will, I am sure, think, would require to be deposed to—the council, for the defence in an action of trespass, where the damages were laid for 10 dollars. The complaint arose from the side-gutter in a street being obstructed by the defendant (a wealthy builder), thereby causing the water to flow into the basement of the plaintiff, thereby damaging his carpet and furniture &c., to the amount claimed. A witness for the plaintiff had to be got rid of (I mean his testimony), else it were a lost case, so the learned gentleman devoted all his energies, like a battering ram, against the trustworthiness of the said witness. After he had dissected his public, moral, religious, and domestic character, by which it appeared he was a combination of all that was infamous, he summed up the following matter, given *verbatim*, but the manner must be supplied by the imagination. “Now, gentlemen of the jury, in confirmation 211 of this, let me ask

Library of Congress

you, did you see that man's face, when he was on the stand delivering his testimony? gentlemen, if you didn't, I did, and I'll just tell you what it looked like when he was twisting out his very probable story. Gentlemen, if you chewed, as it is the misfortune of council to do, I could give you a sympathetic simile, but as I don't know if you do, I'll give you a comparison for his face, when it twisted, and turned, with the effort to keep in the truth, which I was endeavouring to get out of him. It reminded me, gentlemen (raising his voice), of the tail of an old horse when he is dying of convulsions."

He lost his case, and I was glad that the ruffianism of his language met the meed it deserved. The number of spectators are commonly very few, showing that the community has employment for all, and my general impression was that justice is meted out with considerably less law than in Europe; the weight of the arguments were based on facts of testimony, more than on references to ruled cases, and former precedents; and it strikes me, that one may indulge in the luxury of a law-suit, without having to pay so liberally for it, as in the courts of Great Britain or Ireland.

Now any reader who is averse to homilies had better pass over this page, as on it I mean to allude to two practices, the one physical, the other mental, which may be said to constitute the principal faults in the American habits—habits which every American, having the elevation of his countrymen at heart, deplores no less heartily than the writer. One is, that of chewing tobacco; the other profane swearing. This wanton blasphemy, the invocation of the Divinity in every phrase, for the purpose of swearing by his name; the mingling of all that is sacred to worship with ribaldry, foolish or common conversation, is a monstrosity so great, a depravity of mind so hideous, a habit so wicked, that it swallows up the ten thousand good things which would otherwise be admired. On the canals I have seen boys not ten years of age,—old, oh so old in this leprosy of the soul! From remonstrances and observation it strikes me that this habit arises from a desire to exhibit independence, liberty of speech, &c.; that it was freeman-like to swear if you had a mind to; that this is a free country and a man has a right to talk as he likes. But a man has no right to swear if he is within hearing of a second person (although he disbelieves

Library of Congress

his accountability to God), because he offends the ear of the listener. No man has a right to outrage the feelings of any fellow-citizen, therefore no man has a right to swear in the hearing of another. Again no man has a right to offend his Creator; but swearing is offensive to God, therefore no man has a right to swear. Again, such a habit is the infallible index to a coarse, vulgar, and slavish nature, though the man be clothed in scarlet or enrobed in ermine. What refined man, what honest man, who that has a just claim to the name of a freeman and a gentleman, would act thus disrespectfully to the name of his father? not to speak of his God! And what true patriot, what lover of liberty, what freeman deserving the name would crouch to a bad man, or worship a crown on the head 214 of a tyrant, not to speak of bowing down his mind to be fettered by the shackles of a fiend? No, he who swears from habit, or design for empty vanity, emphasis, or passion, is at best an unmanly slave, though his shoulders bore the lion skin of Hercules. The Christian churches and the women of America have a duty in this thing that it were well they more efficiently performed. The original Americans, the Indians of the West, have no word in any of the dialects of their tribes constituting an oath, and in this the uncivilised Red Man is superior to his more elevated pale-faced brother. As to chewing tobacco, that is so self-evidently wrong, so disgusting, that nothing but a vitiated taste could keep the habit alive a single day. In the costly drawing-room, in the courts of law, in libraries, steamboats, steam-cars, in churches, yea even in the pulpit they have the spittoon. Boys of eight, nine, ten years, chew from emulative imitation, which grows into an iron habit at manhood, as imperious, injurious, and more disgusting than that of the opium-eater. The breath is contaminated by a most offensive 215 foetor, the teeth are discoloured, the stomach injured, and the brain stimulated unduly. But to enlarge is needless; let but the women of America declare emphatically against it, and it must fall; how they tolerate it is to me an enigma.

The railroads give a subject for wonder; in many of the cities, the tracks are laid right along the streets, and the cars come into the heart of the city, and what is more, seldom or never an accident occurs. In passing through villages the line is usually through the centre of

Library of Congress

the principal street, and in the country, the crossing roads have no protective gates and stationary watchmen, nothing but simply a large board put up on two posts, on which is written "look out for the locomotive," or "look out for the cars when the bell rings." In some instances the trains are detached from the engine, and each car drawn in by horses, as in New York; but in other instances, as in Philadelphia, the engine brings the cars into the city. Cattle repeatedly get on the track, and are sometimes run over. On the West 216 Chester line, I remember once on looking ahead, seeing three cows on the track about 100 yards off, the stoker or driver sprung the whistle, and immediately they commenced running straight on the line. Two were young, and, maddened with fear, plunged sideway off and escaped, but the other, a fine cow, we gained on fast, never slacking speed. I wished I had my hand on the driver's throat; there he stood: as immovable as if cast in iron; the poor animal still plunged on, and the way she sank and swelled over the hips was pitiful; another moment, and crunch, jolt, crunch, and the poor thing lay a bruised, bleeding, twisted, but not lifeless mass; a low complaining moan was the only sound it made, as she endeavoured to raise her head, as if in appeal against our brutality. I appealed to the conductor, but he only observed that people should keep their cattle off the track; but considering this plan of running railroads right through the middle of streets, on and across main thoroughfares, anywhere, everywhere, through children, pigs, fowls, farms, &c., without stop-gate, or other than a printed 217 precaution, it has often led me to wonder that the accidents are so surprisingly few. There seems to be an intuitive fraternity between most of the animals and the engine; you will see teams of young horses drawn up close to the train, looking as familiar as if it was an old stable mate, and the gruff chu, chu, chu, of its sonorous voice does not excite them in the least. While the train stands, dogs run among the wheels, and I have seen the pigs come and luxuriate on the tar and grease that oozed from the wheel-boxes, and yet they seldom or never receive an injury.

It is impossible to mix in general American society and fail to observe that there is a feeling of implacable hatred to England, as a nation, pervading it. This is reasonably accounted for on the grounds of history and tradition, but more particularly from the fact that there

Library of Congress

is less of human kindness displayed by either nation toward the other, than their mutual profession of Christianity, and the cause of friendship demand. The animosities of both are mainly traditional, and by both exaggerated by L 218 the nursing. America talks of the tyranny and injustice of England, and England quotes the rebellion, ingratitude and contumacy of the colonies; and so the wheel revolves, and the hatchet, though buried, may at any time be dug up in a day, for it is buried deep. And this is a consequence of that old and deformed human error which holds the present generation responsible for the actions of their ancestors. England, strong, rich, and proud in the memories of a thousand years, displays on all occasions that exacting haughtiness which infallibly begets in an inferior power, hatred, and in an equal power, resentment! The one feels it as a wrong, the other as an insult. Moreover, she does not even do by others as she requires others to do by her. And in this fatal error of acting as if might were right, lies the germ of her injustice and the seed of her decline.

America, the marrow of her bones, the strength of her loins, her counterpart in manhood, and superior in energy, her gigantic offspring, which for upwards of a century has strengthened its sinews from the most energetic of the nationalities 219 of Europe, is not now, in the dawn of its strength, disposed to submit to the antiquated airs and dictatorial manner of her ancient mother. And moreover, she remembers, and feels confidence from that memory, that (while yet an infant) she measured strength with her, and cast her down; and knowing this, it is but natural to find her returning the Old World swagger with a liberal addition.

It is most true, that it is hard to expect England (cherishing, as she does, the memory of her past, and possessing her present, greatness and power) to leave off her old egotism, which her former position as to power in a measure justified, and to adopt that tone and manner of equality which her present position, especially with respect to the United States, renders not only expedient, but necessary. It is an article of faith with the schoolboys of England that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen, and there is not a schoolboy in the woods of Michigan or the cities on the coast, who will not tell you that the Austrians

Library of Congress

were beat by the French, the French defeated by the English, and the English L 2 220 were whipped by the Americans. In both cases when the boy has grown a man, John Bull squares off with perfect confidence at any three frog-eaters, and Uncle Sam taps his rifle, and coolly “calculates he can rub out any three Britishers in creation.”

It is hard for that nation which so long exclusively held the balance-sceptre of the world, that island on the European coast whose colonial territory at one time would have formed a continent, from whence wealth and power and learning streamed, as from perennial springs, the bones of whose adventurous citizens have marked the spirit of her enterprise in every latitude and meridian of the earth, on the record of whose greatness the histories of elder dynasties grew dim, and in which energy and wisdom seemed a sequence of her soil,—it is hard, I repeat, for England to sacrifice to expediency those trappings of her pride; to relinquish to equity, that which her power has grasped at the dictate of avarice. Thus the old lady peers superciliously over her spectacles at the young republic, and hesitates with most ungracious awkwardness to extend 221 her queenly hand, and welcome as an equal that nation in the shadow of whose greatness her throne will yet grow dim.

Let it be, however, borne in mind that the Englishman, as an emigrant, is as much respected as any other class of settlers; but sometimes (in fact, nearly in every case), the Englishman will keep talking and comparing, and disparaging the country and habits, not on their essential merits, but because they differ from what he has been familiar with. This foolish habit not unfrequently involves him in much annoyance and unpleasantness, and “out west” will have more serious results. There is no nation in the world winces more under criticism than England, nor is there any countryman in the world more doggedly patriotic than John Bull. But he should remember that, inasmuch as he would fire up at any degrading comparison instituted by a Frenchman between the habits of France and Old England, it is very probable that many a Yankee will “git riled” at any derogatory analogies of a “consarned Britisher.” And whenever I have fallen into a society of Old World folk the 222 staple of conversation was a national scandal, although the very people who were,

Library of Congress

then and there respectively considered, comfortable or affluent, would be spitted upon on the soil they lauded by the very conventionalities they affected to deplore.

The Irish emigrant, on the contrary, escaping as he does from the middleman, poor-house, and potatoes, feels when he comes to the States—and is actually looked upon, not only as a man, but an important one, and is regaled sumptuously—that he has indeed landed on a paradise. He looks at, and speaks of everything with admiration, and although his education and manners may preclude his being familiarly respected, still he is unquestionably liked, and certainly more respected and liked than an Englishman of the same class. But with all, the Americans have formed an idea of all Irishmen from the emigrant, and they find it difficult to suppose that a man who does not speak with a brogue, drink whiskey and swear, can be as truly an Irishman as the type which they have mentally selected as a gauge for the nation. And sometimes the Americans use the terms “Irishman” and “Dutchman” as contemptuous designations. Nor is this to be wondered at, inasmuch as some of both nations (of whom consists the great body of the American emigrants) give reason for unfavourable criticism. But among the most talented, respected, and influential citizens, will be found the descendants of Irishmen.

The German emigrant is judged chiefly from his habits, inasmuch as his language being strange, his criticism is not understood. He is considered a law-abiding, hard-working, mean-living citizen, and is hustled about by the American quite unceremoniously, except at election time, when all distinctions vanish, and there is between all voters “Fraternity and Equality;” in fact, the American citizen is proud, aye! proud as the old Roman. Nor does his financial standing take in the least from, or reach, his self-respect; he holds his head as high, and feels as good without a cent, as if he was a millionaire. And while theoretically acknowledging the equality of, imported citizens, yet it is just as the old Roman citizen looked on those who by purchase or favour gained that proud title. “And the chief captain said ‘with a great price obtained I this freedom.’ And Paul said ‘but I was free-

Library of Congress

born” To any man who reflects for a moment, this state of things not only does not look strange, but is, in fact, the most natural position into which affairs could have settled.

But the most remarkable fact is the unspeakable power of assimilation which the States have. You find that men and women coming over here when 30 and 40 years of age, when the mind is usually stiff, and the habits have been formed, are transformed after a few years, into the habits, social and mental, of the Americans. The why, I leave to the erudite in such matters, the fact stands out, except where the German, possessing the shield of language, congregates into a quarter of a town, or a settlement in the country. But I speak of where the individual is subject fairly to the influences of society, and unavoidably seems to be modelled, in a few years, into a different individuality, and that too, unknown to himself in a great measure.

Let me now refer, for a few lines, to the modes of living in the States, before which I will mention one fact. The first general impression that fixed itself on me was, that, as a people, they were the best dressed people I had seen, and that the popular caricature of long tails, short waists, and strapped pantaloons, was a miserable misrepresentation. The next thing that struck me was, the amount of individuality each person possessed (I mean social individuality—personal importance—that is, atomic as they were in the mass of humanity, yet each atom in that mass had, on every occasion, his individual importance recognised); now, though this is law in other kingdoms, this is practice in the States,—usage, habit, manner. Again, I noticed that the American sets less value on life than Europeans; that is, he does not think the loss of life the greatest loss, the ultimatum. When a man dies, you see none of that sentiment (I use the best term I can think of) which surrounds such an event in older countries. The American is silent in manner, embarrassingly so at first, extremely accurate in his observation of human nature, and any man that cannot bear to be scrutinized, had better not come here. The American judges much by the eye, and has a most enviable power of estimation; your temperament, speech, look, and act, are all taken in by him; and if you can get at the tablet of his judgment, you will find a remarkable daguerreotype of your exact worth written

Library of Congress

thereon. They are phrenologists and physiognomists, not merely as philosophers, but as practical appliers of those inductive sciences, and beneath a show of positive laziness, or languor, there is an amount of energy and action, mental and physical, perfectly surprising. They are not averse to the higher branches of science or literature, but they bend all to utility, and are, as a nation, the best arithmeticians in the world; and this science alone, gives a terse matter-of-fact tone to their mental working: in fact, when a man wants to reflect on a proposition, he says "wait till I figure up." And, let me say, that he must tell a good story who will impose on the American, if his listener can reach means of proof.

To revert to the habits of living, commencing with the boarding-house. The boarding-house 227 is a feature in American society, inasmuch as boarders are to housekeepers as one hundred to one. Old and young, married and single, board out; it is to all of limited income more pleasant and economical than to keep house, and as the American has not that reverence for place, that worship of homestead, which is to be found in Europe, he does not miss the sacred associations of a home. The boarding-houses are of all classes in New York; you can board from 2 1/2 dollars per week to 14 per week. In every case a diversified society is to be met, and the comfort and accommodation correspond with the price. At 6 dollars a week, a very comfortable house can be had, with all the appliances of baths, attention, &c. A few lines descriptive of our table, in my first boarding-house, I subjoin.

Our hostess was a lady of much formal good breeding, and a cool civility, quite chilling, with two daughters, out of whom all the sentiment and softness of girlhood had gone, and into whom much of the iced formality of their mamma seemed to have been pressed. Our boarders were 228 handsome and elegant; an Italian count or prince, or something of that sort, a fine looking fellow, but over dressed, and who eat at dinner as sparingly as if he was dining off upas plants; a small sallow Frenchman, who fancied he bore a resemblance to Voltaire, and was voluble as a mocking-bird; a delicately handsome mother, with a fair and beautiful child, her husband a brusque demi-English, whiskered, on-change, looking person, with two silent sisters, made up the opposite side of our dinner-table. On

Library of Congress

our side, a delicate looking young man, seemingly an author, of a mild humility-speaking countenance, who, at all times, essayed to keep up a conversation with the hostess or daughters, but who was as constantly treated to monosyllabic replies, and thought it was of no consequence; a German, studious and bearded, touched with “Kant,” and addicted to his meerschaum, with a few more ordinary mortals, made up our set.

Passing from the boarding-house to the hotels, I will merely remark of the city hotels that they are incredibly numerous, extensive, and magnificent. The charges in cities vary from 229 1 to 3 dollars a day, but for 2 dollars you are accommodated in a style and degree which would cost at least 16s. 6d. in London; but as the palm has been long since ceded to the restaurants, oysters, and hotels of New York, I do not dwell on them, but will speak of the hotels in the western and middle states. In every village of twenty houses you find a hotel and a church. The rate of travellers' charges varies according to the style of the house, from 37 1/2 cents to 2 dollars a day; the latter charge is exceptional, being only paid at the Tremont, in Chicago, and Burnet House, Cincinnati, and Middle Cleveland. The general village or town price is 1 dollar a day, and on cross stage routes in the interior, it is only 75 cents. I subjoin a bill of fare of one of the latter houses, from which the others can be estimated.—Breakfast: tea, coffee, milk and water, white and corn bread, buck-wheat cakes, biscuits, currant-pies, beef-steak, pork-steak, sausages, fish, and pickles. Dinner, —I quote from a dollar and a half house:—roast-beef, veal, ham, chickens, goose, turkey, fish, soup, vegetables of various kinds: dessert 230 of fruits, pastry, jellies, blanc mange, &c. The time consumed in dining is very short; but, as to those writers who speak of the Americans as eating largely, it is quite opposite to fact—they do not eat largely; and had “Monsieur Mamont” seen a Yorkshire man eat, he would have had a standard to go by. The reverse is more generally true, they are abstemious; and if they ate more, and took more time, their bodies would be heavier, and their life longer. But I do not know if their brain would be so active, and, as I before stated, life is not the desideratum, it is rather action, and its results; if the said action tends to take off ten or twenty years, they think the gain is equivalent to loss, and so they balance the account of life.

Library of Congress

I now come to a more important feature, that is the causes of the republic's stability. Let me not be supposed to be about to furnish any abstruse and involved historical parallels, or profound theory on soil and circumstance. I will merely mention what I have considered from observation the causes of the national stability. Aye, but says Blackwood, or others of that class, 231 "you are begging the question!" It is not granted that the nation has stability. Well, sirs, a word with ye; by stability I mean, not merely firmness of position, but solid and progressive development, combined with firmness of form. Any writer who depends much on theory, and wishing to make out a case, can at all times in this age supply himself with data to support his view; and especially at election time in the United States, if the party-papers are to be believed, the country is going to ruin down hill. But without referring to national statistics, which indubitably refute such a falsehood, and which are by European political economists said to be too good to last, let us see for ourselves; and what do we see? First, where a century and a half ago there was a continental wilderness inhabited by stray bands of nomadic savages, we have now, a powerful nation with the highest degree of civilization developed, and numbering twenty-three millions of souls! Well, that looks certainly like progress. But we also see, that this continent formerly inhabited only on the sea-board, and under one or two states' 232 government, is now subdivided in its whole extent into thirty-six governments, each independent and self-regulating in a great degree, yet all, as circles within a circle, bound together by a common constitution. This certainly not only looks like progress, but likewise firmness on the postulates of multiplication and self-reliance. Again we notice in some of those states, where formerly, within fifty years, the virgin-forests grew, cities whose population exceeds a hundred of thousands—we find where twenty years since a few houses stood, a town of thousands now stands; where five years since a frame-house was to be seen, a brick-dwelling may now be observed—where the log-cabin stood last year, there is a frame-house this—and where a season ago we might have tracked to their lairs the panther or the deer, we now find the log-cabin of the pioneer, to the prowess of whose axe the ample clearing is a testimony. Thus we are led infallibly to conclude that whatever certain newspapers may say, and however European critics may cavil, the great facts of observation prove that, the United States have stability,

Library of Congress

233 because they have been and are (on a scale unknown in the history of the world), progressing in development of power and resource, and preserving in that development, their original pyramidal firmness of form.

There is another European error I would briefly advert to, which arises from the other section of writers. The monarchist aver that the States are certain to relapse into submission to a monarch. The democratic party think that the States may be imitated, if monarchical nations can only succeed in throwing off their rulers. Now let me premise that, I believe that the republican form, as existing in the United States, is the nearest approach to perfect human government that the world holds any record of; yet my equally firm conviction is, that the constitution of the United States cannot be carried out by any European nation that I remember at this moment, nor ever, until the body of any of the nations are as fitted for self-government as the Americans are. The greatness, the progressiveness, the stability of America, are the result of the energy, intelligence, industry, perseverance, 234 and self-respect of the American people. The form and constitution of the American government was, and is, merely the consequence, not the cause of her national greatness. Such a people as the Americans are, could not live, by a natural law, under any other form of government than that they have made. Thus, until the mental standard of any European people is raised to the right level and quality, though they may be put upon their feet by a revolution, and get a staff in their hand, on which is inscribed "republic," yet when they attempt to walk they will stumble and fall, and be ready to lean on any strong monarchical arm, that an energetic man may offer. This fact should be reflected on by every enthusiast, who looks only to the United States as a result, not as a lesson; and to liberty, as to learning, there is no royal road. Any nation to emulate America, must equal first the Americans. Has this view not had recent illustrations? France is not a republic, because her people are not republican; theoretically they are, no doubt, nay, actually they are even in 235 desire; liberty they love as the barricades attest, but they want the essential—individual republicanism, without which the heroic self-sacrifice of the *ouvrier* and the valour of the student are only lost, so far as permanent republicanism

Library of Congress

is concerned. Every man born on American soil is an epitome of the whole; he is self-reliant, self-acting, cool, resolute, incessantly persevering, and independent, and I have been astonished to find, even among those emasculated excrescences which wealth has engendered for a season, whose life is devoted to spending money they have not made, even among that monkeyism, may be detected the germs of the virtues I have named. And do we not see how an oversight of those facts, and a fervent faith, caused the wreck of those patriotic reformers, who thought too sanguinely of their people's standard, and were, except by a very small number, not only deserted but opposed, nay, even persecuted by the people they would emancipate? I refer to John Mitchell, O'Brien, Meagher, and their confederates; and when the glories of the dream 236 vanished, when the individual serfdom of the people cost the price of those brave mens' liberty, there was an historical fact recorded, that the people of Ireland were alike incapable to carry out, and unworthy to receive a republican, or any other form of government, save such as is suited to a people who think by proxy, and act from impulse (not judgment), who are willing to receive any form recommended by their priests, and ready to hoot any other, though its claims were as clear as the postulates of Euclid.

In England an obstacle exists in the veneration for names, which is as formidable to free government, as the superstition of the Irishman with respect to his priesthood. To the Englishman, the crown, lords, dukes and earls are to him as the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman, Bishop M'Hale and father Murphy are to his fellow-subjects, and that hereditary homage is not to be rooted out in a day or a year. Moreover, he is more sensual than the Irishman, and as long as his stomach is full, his loyalty is proof; while the Irishman is never so well disposed to be disaffected, as when he is well off, because he has then no immediate 237 want to distract his natural tendencies to reform. In fact Ireland requires all that England can spare of soldiers, a large body of police at an expense of 200 dollars a year each man; and the unwitting cooperation of the Latin priesthood, the established church, and government appointments, to keep the national spirit repressed. And if the rising generation be educated, it requires no prophet to foretell that they will take Meagher's

Library of Congress

saying as their motto; and if the altar stands between man and his liberty, will say, Down with the altar; that is, when a priest steps out of his vestry, to prove that freedom in the next world requires slavery in this, or will undertake to bind them for the Philistines, he will find them an unshorn people, who, Samson-like, will burst the withs, and tell such a priest that he is a false one. And should any future Daniel promise to put his head on a block, they will push him aside as a blockhead, and feeling they are prepared to be free, and ready to purchase their right at any price, they will so declare, and so succeed; for under such circumstances, failure is impossible, under any other success would prove no good. In the foregone remarks I intended that it would appear from the statement that I spoke of the people in all cases, not of the people of Paris, or London, or Dublin, but the masses who constitute literally the nation. Another want I should have alluded to, and that, perhaps, the most important. I will make the allusion by stating what the fact is in the United States, and it will appear from it that there is a want of resemblance in England, Ireland, France, Germany, &c. I mean an individual acquaintance and familiarity with the use of arms. There is a law which requires every citizen to be enrolled as a soldier to carry arms, and muster for drill at certain periods, and any who do not comply, have to pay an exemption tax; to dwell on this fact and the results that grow from it, would fill an important volume; but the mention here is sufficient to cause reflection on the principle, its importance, and necessity.

Let us look again. We find that any serious revolution is the result of pressure: the pressure of arbitrary laws or usages; the pressure of poverty; therefore, another ground of the United States' stability is, that her laws are made by the people, and poverty, in the European sense, is unknown. I have never seen an American beggar. I have seen emigrants beg, but not a native American. It is from the latter cause that European nations have to look for serious revolutions, and I will not quote Louis Blanc, Bulwer, or Bright, to prove by statistical tables, the terrible amount of want, stark, grim want, that presses upon the masses of France, England, and Ireland, even upon the working masses, and which continually incites to revolt and disaffection; but I do not assert that a revolution springing

Library of Congress

from this cause is either permanent or well-formed. I do not pause to consider whether the republic of France will withstand any future attempt of an ambitious chief magistrate who will save them the trouble of minding the state-business. I do not canvass the probability of whether Ireland, even had she attained independence, could keep it; in view of her natural love of debate, a numerous body of inimical citizens within herself, and the powerful 240 navy of England forming an impenetrable blockade, and most of all when that fleet and the army of England are filled by her own citizens ready to fire on her whenever they receive the order to do so. But I do mention those things to show that the name is nothing, the form of government is nothing, it is in the people the secret of progress and happiness lies. It is the people who make the government, not the government a people. Is it no proof of this that the timid, miserable, hat-lifting, your-honouring Kerry-man, who at home sat down content to the skib of pratees and a grain of salt, whose happiness consisted in procuring these at as little an amount of labour as possible, and selling a “slip of a pig” to pay his cabin-rent on Lady-day, that when that man has been in the States for a year or two, you find him head up, plain-spoken, and independent, used to three meals a day, and meat at each. And what were the causes? first, that he had to work, work you understand—aye, and did work, and better still, I he was well paid for it; and still better, the man that paid him felt as much obliged to him as 241 he did for being employed. And the poor fellow who, when going to mass on a Sunday, walked at the other side of the road, and doffed his caubeen, and his wife curtsied, if they met a bodagh farmer riding along, or were overtaken by Father Leary (the son of old Jack Leary of Kilgobbin), now holds up his head and keeps on his hat, though he met President Taylor, or Bishop Hughes. The wearing the hat is nothing, but the feeling that prompts it is “pretty considerable,” for the man is changed his feelings tell him now that he need not bow down to any other man, except at the dictate of politeness.

An instance of the observation of this habit of republicans, which was not a little amusing as coming from a gentleman of much learning, an imported citizen, of course, who, when it was suggested that Pio Nono would establish his bishopric in the United States, at the

Library of Congress

time that his refractory Italians rose against him, gravely stated as his objection, that if the holy man would come over, his vision would be offended by the view of hatted heads and elevated boot-heels. 242 But this, though it may cause some Americans to smile, will cause many others to think, because in this the Bishop was perfectly consistent. Nor do I see how a man who conscientiously believes that spiritual power should be vested in one man,—a spiritual monarch—and who has trained his reasoning faculties to support that view,—how he can conscientiously believe that a civil government can be good, which teaches the very opposite principle. But the fact is, that thousands of thousands of Latin Catholics are good republicans and true, but they are not therein so consistent, or as good Catholics as their Bishop, though they may be much better men and more truly Christian. The most casual observer cannot refrain from observing the difference between the Catholic church (when I say church, I mean literally the church, the people) here and in Europe; its superiority in every sense, that is, if a greater degree of tolerance and independence prove superiority. The mass is said in Latin, the creed and formula the same, but the people, the church proper, is infinitely elevated; a consequence 243 of which is, that the little end of the beam, the priests and hierarch, the officers of the church, the servants of the people, have to be content with less consideration and man-worship than they receive elsewhere; but they are, as a body, satisfied, for an occasional querulous complaint is no proof of the contrary, though it come from a bishop. Another fact is, that the Episcopal church, and Latin church, the deadly enemies of each other in England and Ireland, where the Episcopal is the Established church by law, and where the Roman Catholic is taxed for its support, although he conscientiously believes it heretical, are here on terms of as close fraternity as any two fundamentally-differing sects can be; in fact, the Catholic will stretch out his hand to the Episcopalian infinitely sooner than to any other branch of the Reformed churches. I had intended tracing the connection between the sectarian parties in religion and politics, but fearing such would be interesting but to a decimal of my readers, refrain for the present at least.

This episode would be imperfect, were I to omit mentioning the practical political superiority of the universal suffrage, as exemplified in the United States, which secures the greatest amount of real representation. It precludes the possibility of bribery, or over-influence, which are amongst the chief arguments against the limited franchise; and, moreover, so perfect is the organization, that the votes of this immense empire were registered between sunrise and sunset on the day of the election of General Zachariah Taylor, for President of the Republic; and, in the town in which I happened to be, on the day in question, the polling went off with a degree of quietness and order which would be in vain looked for at the hustings of a contested borough in the dominions of her majesty of England.

245

CHAPTER XI. NEW ORLEANS—A NIGHT SCENE.

“Is there no boat? no hand to save? No, all is silent as the grave! Yet still he strikes with failing hand.”

Having, kind reader, been favoured with your company down the “Father of Waters,” permit me now to shift the scene, so that we may approach the Crescent City from another and less familiar point of view. Let us board the good ship “Niobe,” bound for New Orleans, and slowly beating against the Gulf-stream, between the western keys of the Bahama Islands and the coast of Florida. The sunsets in this region are of an intense beauty, defying the tongue of the poet and the pencil of the painter. Around us may be seen the numerous wreckers which congregate between Abaco and Tortugas, and whose livelihood depends on the casualties of those vessels which are unfortunate enough to get ashore in that intricate passage. Some of the said wreckers are manned by as villainous-looking crews as ever scuttled a ship in the same waters thirty years since. And it is not difficult to imagine that, should surveillance be withdrawn, for “wrecker” we might cite “pirate,” in describing the cruisers among the Bahamas; and novel-writers would have any needed amount of the home-made article without importing from Borneo, Barbary, or

Library of Congress

Greece. But leaving probabilities to the curious, I will continue by taking up the narrative at the portion of my Journal, which reaches to our standing off and on the Tortugas light.

The sun had gone down on this evening with a degree of gorgeous beauty seemingly surpassing any we had hitherto observed, giving no slight charm to our first impressions of the Gulf of Mexico. After sun-down the wind fell away, and we lay motionless on the slightly-undulating 247 waters. As soon as the moon rose I amused myself in watching, over the taffrail, the sharks gamboling about, and apparently enjoying the scene and themselves vastly. But one could not help imagining how much their hilarity would be increased by the cry of "a man overboard!" A few days previous we captured a sucking shark, about three feet long, which I dissected, and found the current idea among sailors of the nose being the most vital part of a shark, to be founded on fact; as I found in the specimen alluded to, that about two inches from the eye toward the snout, the brain was situated, and only protected by a tough cartilage, which would be, in an older shark, bone, but not proof against a smart blow in that region; while you might strike without any seeming injury any other part of the body, with ten times the force. The skin is peculiarly tough, and some of this was preserved by the carpenter, and dried to use as sand-paper. Our cook asked his sharkship to make a mess for the men; he dressed it next day, and on tasting it I 248 found the flavour not at all disagreeable, certainly better than a dolphin which we tried some days previously.

The Gulf of Mexico, for 60 miles, is coloured by the waters of the Mississippi, and occasionally debris of the distant forests may be seen floating east. Coming morning, the breeze freshened, and we stood gallantly for the Beelees. At day-break we passed a huge forest-tree, which had possibly come down from the heart of the Alleghany Mountains; upon it was seated a sea-bird, motionless and solitary, drifting out upon the great eastern ocean, and somehow calling to my mind (though it may seem incongruous) Campbell's "Last Man." The wind continuing fair, we shortly came in sight of the long low mounds formed by the debouche of the river, running along the edge of the horizon like a cloud-streak. The offing was crowded with vessels of every size, from all parts of the world,

Library of Congress

standing off and on, as they awaited their turn to be borne up stream by the powerful tug-steamers that plunged hither and thither, bearing off one, two, and sometimes 249 three vessels at once. At length came our turn, and we were grappled by a steamer, and shortly after a Brazilian sloop was made fast on the other side and so we proceeded up one of the mouths against a current of seemingly five miles an hour. The banks at either side were low, reedy, and filled with drift logs, on which lay alligators of various sizes, basking in the sun; they are not easily distinguished at first from the logs on which they lie, but the eye soon becomes practised in their detection. When we had passed the point at which the south-west pass diverges from the main-stream, the banks became more defined, and were well-wooded, the settlements' and dwellings assumed a more beautiful appearance, and we passed many boats filled with pleasure-parties, decorated with the gay tri-colour of La Belle France. Some of the plantations were of immense extent, and beautifully cultivated.

As we swept round one of the bends of the river, where the original forest stood, as it grew in matted luxuriance, two little children M 5 250 appeared upon the bank, a boy and a girl; the boy held a fishing-rod in his hand, the girl a basket of flowers. They were simply dressed; she with a wide-leafed Panama hat, from beneath which fell a flood of glittering curls,—her dress was a gay-coloured tunic, with a ribbon-sash; he had on a striped shirt, open at the neck, and white pants, his hat being less wide in the leaf, and his hair darker and less luxuriant. Standing together thus, beneath those old forest-trees, and among the great-leaved tropical ground plants, they seemed a complete impersonation of those beautiful unfortunates; with which our youthful hearts sympathised to tears, “Paul and, Virginia.” And as we swept past them, and they waved welcome and adieu, we felt younger by many a year, and once more walked in the memories of boyhood. So it is, that in after life, when the cares of time cluster round upon and harden the heart, even then, at times, a scene, a word, an association, breaks the spell, and we are carried back to the dream-land of youth, 251 thus proving, that the spirit of our better and unselfish nature “is not dead but sleepeth.”

Library of Congress

By night we made Orleans, and were towed up, seemingly for two miles past a range of vessels, moored as close as they could lie, with yards a-peak, and in many instances in tiers of three and four deep, against the Levee. At length we came to our moorings, alongside a huge East Indiaman, which having just landed her cargo, towered above us, as we would over a yacht. Before we were made fast, a flight of "runners" fell upon our poop-bulwarks, shrouds, &c., like as if we were boarded by a set of demons. Regardless of captain, officers, or aught else, those human horse-leeches fastened upon every seaman on deck, claiming acquaintance, shouting, swearing, urging, and promising. They clustered round every hand, from the second mate to the cabin-boy; nor was the hawser well taut, when they had the greater portion of the crew on shore, plying them with brandy, and towing them to the various boarding-houses (groggeries), by which 252 those harpies are employed, and where, within a week, those honest tars would be fleeced, not only of their hard-earned wages, but also of their advance on the next voyage.

How long will it be before the legislature will feel it incumbent to interfere and prevent by law the system of plunder at present operating against the hardy and simple citizens who do business upon the great waters, and those mariners of other shores who bear away with them ideas incongruous with the historical portrait of a republic, but only too true of existing reality? At present the seaman is plundered in a few days of that scanty and hard-earned fee which he has won in battling with the treacherous billow and the fierce winds, by a toil and danger of which landsmen have no conception. He, who when so required, carries to every zone the arms of the empire or the commerce of its citizens. He, who has built up and consolidated the glory and the greatness of Britain. He, to whom America must ever look as the chief among the sources of her power and influence; the man at once brave and 253 simple, hardy and frank, the dweller upon the great deep, he is unequal in the contest of cunning and dissimulation for those 'long-shore pillagers, versed in every art to entrap and outwit the often grey-headed, yet simple-hearted, and whole-souled mariner.

Library of Congress

Alongside is an emigrant ship; the passengers scramble on shore, and by midnight many return with such accounts to their fellow-travellers of the New World, as could only be accounted for (when applied to the first municipality of New Orleans) by supposing that two months at sea, the narrow limits of a maindeck, salt provisions, and scant water, had imparted a readiness to tinge poetically any land where oranges, water-melons, fresh meats, coffee, and wines, were to be had, displayed with the advantages of stationary tables, music, and gaslight. And now might be heard coming up from the open hatchway sounds of merry-making, in which the song of the sailor (to the chorus of which all messmates clapped on) might be heard mingling with the undulating peculiar ballad-melody of the Irishman, as he solaced another 254 circle of listeners with “Ma colleen dhas, crutheen a mo.”

But ere long “inspiring bold John Barleycorn” began to assert his power, and soon angry words were heard, and then a blow, and then a scuffle. Proceeding down the ladder I beheld a most exciting scene, the women and children were screaming, and trying to clamber into the berths, while on the floor was a crowd of men swaying hither and thither in a group round a seaman and a Liverpool Irishman, who dealt each other blows that could be heard above the din. Immediately they were down, and some one raised a cry of “foul play” by the sailor, which individual was answered by a home-thrust from a son of Neptune, who thus testified his dissent from that opinion, and hereupon the fight became general. One philanthropic fellow seized the safety-lamp, and jumping up on the boxes, held it alternately hither and thither to illuminate the points where the fray was hottest, or, as he it expressed with a full Munster *patois*, “To giv’ them light at their divarshin.” The sailors being considerably out-numbered, drew 255 their knives, and gained a little ground. At this point of the row the mate, a powerful man, with a voice like Tolmides, came to the rescue, and by voice and a belaying-pin, succeeded in laying the riot, and some few of its supporters; no one was killed, but some were bruised and cut badly.

Library of Congress

In another hour all was silent as the grave, and I stood in the waist of our ship looking out on the broad and deep river, which lay covered with a thin hazy vapour, rendering the Algiers coast indistinct and shadowy. In the distance the thousand lights of the sleeping city looked like so many stars. Through the water-fog, and far far away, might be heard the labouring puff of a distant steamer bearing up stream, some other wanderer from the waste; or the distant barking of a watch-dog; while the splash of the powerful current as it swept along our bows and side, made up a combination of sight and sound, calculated to evoke a train of reflection. Taking its hue from the time and scene, it is at such times that the memory delights to revert to the past, and count 256 the flowers and thorns that have been gathered or trodden on in the path of life.

My attention was attracted by something lying on the forecastle, and on approaching I found it to be a man, who lay with bared breast at full length upon his back, and his cap having fallen off, his broadly-marked features looked in the moonlight like those of a dead man. As I looked at him I could not fail to observe how much passion and depravity had written on those pallid features, and that prematurely-furrowed brow. It was such as that of which the poet says—

“There the peri's eye could read Dark tales of many a ruthless deed, The ruin'd maid, the shrine profaned, Oaths broken, and the threshold stained With blood of guests; there written all Black as those damning drops that fall From the accusing angel's pen, Ere mercy weeps them out again.”

Thus, looking on that crime-worn man, I bethought me how that, mayhap, over his infant years, a fond mother had breathed her prayers of hope, and cherished those bright anticipations 257 which only a mother's love can create; with what care and solicitude may his youth have been guarded by a father's eye, and had been at last, with the dawn of manhood upon his brow, sent forth upon the world to win his way to wealth, character, and fame. Yet, failing to remember the precepts and example of home, I saw him, as it were, drawn by little and little within the vortex of temptation and sin, then hurled round

Library of Congress

and round, in the whirlpool of profligacy and dissipation, which at length cast him forth as he now lay, the wreck and mockery of a man. Knowing the danger of a passive exposure to the insidious night-dew, I stooped down, and tried to rouse, but he merely stirred a little, grumbled an oath or two, and relapsed into the lethargic sleep of the drunkard.

I now went below to my cabin, and rolling myself in a travelling rug, threw myself on my berth, to try and slumber in the morning. In about an hour I was suddenly awakened by a rush on deck, and the cry of “a man overboard!” Springing up I rushed on deck, and running to the taffrail, where the chief mate was standing, 258 saw the head and shoulders of a man emerge from the waters about twenty yards astern. The features gleaming, pallid in the moonlight, as he tried for an instant to head the current; that instant was enough for me to recognise the strongly-marked lineaments of the “runner,” whom I had seen asleep on the forecastle. As he turned round his eye was fixed on us, and clearing his mouth of the water, he shouted with the energy of despair, “a rope!” but he was out of line-heave from us, and he was borne down stream. One of the crew, a Baltimorean, a remarkably fine young seaman, now ran aft and shouted “is that Dick?”—“Rope!” was the only response from the unfortunate fellow as he was carried off by the powerful current past the line of silent black hulls that walled the shore, precluding the possibility of his being saved except by a boat. The Baltimorean, who was the friend of the drowning man, shouted madly, “Ship ahoy! Throw that man a rope! Heave a line!” &c. But his cry received no responsive “Aye, aye!” from the line of ships which lay black and silent. 259 “Jump ashore—run down the Levee—take the first skiff and shove out! look alive, it's his only chance!” said the mate, and turned to resume his walk on the poop. Still from the distance every few minutes came that solitary cry, amid the waters, “Rope!—rope!” growing fainter and fainter, as the chilling flood swept him away. He was evidently a powerful swimmer, and had been sobered by the plunge, nor had lost his presence of mind, for he swam slowly with the current, kept clear of the hulls, and hailed as well as swam, in hope of some of the vessels having a watch set. Our boats had all been unrigged from the davits

Library of Congress

early in the day, and were filled with cables, so that it would be impossible to launch any of them in time.

“Any chance for that man, Mr.—” I asked, addressing the mate.

“Except Bill gets a skiff soon, or he is picked up by a steamer,—none that I know of. The current sets in to the centre, at the bend below, and he will be too much chilled to make against it.”

“He would seem, from his voice,” I added, 260 “not to have lost his presence of mind; for his cry was not so much of fear as of desperation.”

“Yes, he knows his chances mighty well, I expect, and ha'en't much hope either; but I guess he'll float until he's chilled through.”

I felt excited to a degree, for still, though now scarcely audible, came, through the haze that distant shout of “Rope—rope!” and then the feeling of the impossibility of giving the unfortunate fellow succour. I hurried down and threw myself on my berth, and strove to emulate the stoicism of the mate, but in vain; for still I saw that death-like face, with dripping hair and fixed eye, borne away upon the flood to that shore whence no mariner returns. It was awful! Fancy what agony of spirit he must have felt, when no living soul responded to his hail, no rope cast to his cry! And he felt that thus, in the silent night, with all his sins upon his head, within a few rods of land, he was hurrying to his judgment. Methinks it were not so agonising if on a wild sea, when the storm rages, and the foundering ship yields 261 the seaman to the roaring and fathomless billow; from the first he feels the absence of hope, and perishes prepared and with fortitude, with no cry save that of the soul for mercy.

It seemed from inquiry, that in awaking from his lethargy, he either stepped or fell overboard, and so was carried away.

Library of Congress

New Orleans, on a first inspection, especially if the summer season is advanced, is not admirable to the traveller; wealthy it is. You see the immense Levee crowded with mountains of merchandise, to an amount incredible until seen. Thousands and tens of thousands of cotton bales, flour barrels, corn sacks, tobacco hogsheads, brandy pipes, everything in fact. Each hill of goods, having a little flag stuck on it, to denote the owner; and then the innumerable number of drags, driven by negroes, shouting, laughing, chatting, and swearing; and over all the cloud of dust, the fleet of up-river steamboats, the hundreds of hotel runners, men with parrots, men with shells, men with monkeys, men with fruits, &c., make up a scene at once amusing and imposing. The streets are badly paved, and there being no drainage except artificial, they are fearfully dirty, especially in the first or French municipality. In the side-gutters may be seen a stagnant fluid, coated with putridity; add to the impossibility of drainage a marsh which lies between the city and Lake Ponchartrain, and you will conclude that the position of the city is one suited to the generation of plague and pestilence. The Levee is an embankment some 4 feet high, running along the shore for some 163 miles, to prevent the city from being overflowed in the season of high-water. It is continued in a less substantial manner by the planters along the coast for a distance of some 600 miles.

The difference between the French and American municipalities is very striking and decidedly in favour of the latter. The public buildings are not equal to the wealth of the city, but they speak of a custom-house being built which will redeem this defect in part. The markets are well supplied and deserve a visit; the French cemetery also, and the shell-road. On my first visit to Orleans I got in 263 on a Sunday morning, and was astonished to see a horse-race, balloon-ascension, and the theatres advertised instead of charity sermons or missionary appeals. And on walking through the French portion of the city I found the various mechanics working at their trades, and the bazaars open for trade as on a secular day. But the sabbath seemed to be properly observed in the American municipality.

Library of Congress

In the slave marts, in Evans' Arcade, I had an opportunity of seeing, some days after, a sale of slaves, among which was a beautiful quadroon girl, neatly dressed, and very intelligent; her price was 2,000 dollars. The field negroes went from 600 to 800; they were dressed up in their best clothes, and assumed their best looks. When they saw a "massa" whose appearance they liked, they chattered and laughed quite merrily, and would afford a bad text to a violent free-soiler. Nevertheless, in this day and generation, it were to be wished by all men that the negro should be allowed to take that place which Nature has organised him for, namely, a servant for hire, not from 264 purchase. For though the actual difference may be in favour of the latter, still the fiction of freedom makes a universe of difference; why else the conceded superiority of a Cornish miner over a plantation negro?

One of the features of New Orleans is its free lunches. At 11 o'clock you walk into the St. Charles, or other hotel or coffee-house, and find a table spread with turkey, roast-beef, chickens, soup, and any delicacy of the season, from which you are helped *ad libitum*; and you choose a glass of wine, brandy, ale, cider, or other drink, for which you pay 12½ cents. Hotel charges vary from 3 to 1½ dollars a-day. The St. Charles is the best hotel; its price for a desirable room is 3 dollars.

Below the city some six miles is the battle ground. The plains of Chalmatti, where Jackson defeated the British under Packenham, on Sunday, June 8th, 1814. The American general fortified his position with cotton bales, and being flanked by the river on one side, and a marsh on the other, the loss of the English was terribly disproportionate; it being 265 estimated variously as two thousand five hundred and three thousand, while that of the Americans was only thirteen in killed and wounded, which numbers, while they prove a devoted and heroic bravery on the one side, no less indubitably demonstrate a stubborn and deadly opposition on the other; for the cotton bale fortification does not account thoroughly for the repulse, it being certainly more inflammable than the battlements of Badajos, more easily surmounted, and in all things but its defenders immeasurably inferior to hundreds of fortifications that had crumbled beneath the tread of the British grenadiers.

Library of Congress

Nor can Brother Jonathan, therefore, be severely censured for remembering those things, and enjoying a little self-glorification for so evident a victory. Although amateur tacticians, or a fragment of the defeated, may possibly explain the matter in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the pride and glory of old England, yet it is exactly similar to an old veteran of the Garde du corps undertaking to demonstrate in a Parisian *café* N 266 how Napoleon le Grand won the battle of Waterloo.

The peculiar and contrasted styles of the houses, particularly in the French and Spanish portion of the city, gives the idea of a provincial town in France rather than an American city. Many have courts and gardens, and are very commodious and elegant, but in other parts they are a jumble of fantastic habitations, strung together in a fashion that would defy even the individuality of Dickens to describe. Yet if that gentleman had walked from Canal Street to Lafayette along Tschapatoulie Street, he would have written a chapter that would repay perusal. The visitor should reach Orleans between November and April; as to any but a Creole of the tropics it is scarcely inhabitable in the summer months, nor do I consider it at any time a pleasant residence except for the epicurean or the native.

267

CHAPTER XII. WESTERN SKETCHES.

“WESTWARD, OH!”

Gentle Reader ! let us now proceed upon our way to that portion of the Union known as “The West,” pausing for a moment to reflect how different is the meaning of that term now from that which it bore some fifty years since. Then the Lakes and the Alleghanies were the boundary of its application, later still the forest of Ohio and Michigan, and those hunting grounds of the red man bounded by the Mississippi, explored by such hardy pioneers as Boone, was the district to which the term West was applied; but now the term comprehends that vast region known as Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Arkansas on the frontier, and bounded only by the great chain of the distant Rocky Mountains. N 2

The principal feature of the West are those vast Llanos, or Pampas, which extend from the Wabush to the head-waters of the Missouri, and most truly they are as magnificent as wonderful to the admirer of scenic grandeur; named by the French word Prairie, or meadow, they are usually set down at an erroneous estimate in the mind of the traveller. But when he is fairly in on the prairie, he will find how infinitely low his estimate was of their extent and magnificence; but as this chapter is beaded "Sketches," I will not hesitate to transcribe from my note-book the dottings of my first trip on THE ROLLING PRAIRIES OF ILLINOIS, in the May of 1850. From all that I had read and imagined of those great land-wastes, I looked forward with an anxiety bordering on impatience for our entrance upon the Prairie Proper, doubtless with as much desire as those feel to see the ocean who for the first time approach the coast.

At length, between Jacksonville and Springfield we came upon it, and I looked out upon a vast field like those great cotton-bottoms that 269 stretch off from the lower coast of the Mississippi; in portions it was ploughed and fenced, and on the meadow part were scattered immense flocks of sheep, adding much to the beauty, though detracting from the impressiveness of the scene. It was not until we entered on the Deleran prairie between Springfield and Bloomington, that the fullest conceptions of their extent and grandeur were surpassed: outstretched and undulating, lay around us a vast ocean of meadowland; in some parts bounded and stretched in upon, or dotted with coasts, capes, or islands of forest-wood; some among the latter not inaptly reminding one of those oases in the Sahara where, beneath the shadow of spreading trees, and lulled by the murmurings of springs of living water, the members of the wearied caravan snatch a hasty but luxurious repose. Yet, while at points the sight was thus relieved by wood away to the west, far as the eye could reach, the plain, blended with the distant sky, was unstudded by a single tree, and the horizon only broken in places by the huge smoke-wreath of some distant bottom-fire. The day was hot, so that the sun's rays 270 elicited from the earth a translucent wavy vapour which produced a perfect *mirage*, so that you fancied you saw

Library of Congress

in the distance a broad and shining lake: at times a light and cooling breeze would come over the waving waste laden with the perfume of flowers, thus counteracting in a measure the heat of the sun. The prairie grouse, quail, &c., fluttered or strutted familiarly across our course, at times so near that they were within reach of the driver's whip; yet, were you to get out of the coach, they immediately become shy as antelopes; hence it is that they are always hunted in a buggy. In parts of the land-waste, but "few and far between" may be seen the dwelling of some tamer of the wilderness, who has surrounded his house with a few young trees; and who has acted out the sentiment of Cowper, who sighed—

"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness!"

if we except the other line of the couplet, *viz.* ,

"Some boundless contiguity of shade,"

which latter, from the timid appearance of the incipient grove, will not have its fulfilment in his 271 day and generation. As we swept along with four fast horses over the green sward, so softly that the wheels seemed to revolve on velvet, I threw open the coach at either side, so as to command an entire view; and lay back in utter abandonment of delight, drinking into satiety the fulness of beauty which invested the scene, and that day is to my memory, in the words of the exquisite line of poor Keats—

"A thing of beauty, and a joy for ever!"

It was one of those clear, pure, life-giving days in which we find the clay to sit lightly on our spirit, and feel a spiritual participation in the humming harmonies of nature, which elevate and direct the reflections of the soul to a region of thought which at other times, and in other places, it knows not of. At such times we feel that earth and air are perceptibly vital, swarming with myriads of busy happy creatures, whose life-time is a day, and their world a sun-ray, or a grass-blade, and fair flowers and rich-hued grasses, smile and wave in joy and beauty, out here in this uninhabited plain; yet each and all, 272 insect

Library of Congress

and bird, grass and flower, sustained, fed, beautified, and cared for, even as the greatest monarch among men. And thus may we not conclude, with truth and wisdom, that He who created the heavens and the earth, yet delighteth in the work of his hands, and careth for, and is worshipped by, the little flower in the wilderness. It is at such times, when the blood is purified with the untainted air, and flows buoyantly in its channels, that the elastic mind regains momentarily its lost nature, and all things seem to rejoice and smile. In the present instance, having the coach quite to myself, I was enabled to enjoy the luxury of my meditation unbroken, as the case otherwise might have been, by the practical remarks of some non-poetic fellow-traveller, as to “the valu of hogs in this sekshun;” or “a wonder ef they haen't no fence-rails handy?” “what *that* land was worth an acre?” “ef it was entered yet?” or “expect it would yield *putty* good corn.”

It is an impression of mine that those vast steppes were at one time the basin of one, or a succession of lakes, as they certainly resemble 273 an alluvial deposit; and it also is an opinion of mine that the opening of Michigan Lake was at one time from the south,—which opinion is founded on an observation of the valley, in which the waters of the Dis Plains and Illinois now flow some five hundred miles, and the true banks of the Mississippi, which for a thousand miles give indications of being formerly the channel of a body of water compared with which the “father of waters” is but a stream. In the upper portion of the Illinois valley, about two miles south of Joliet, there is a large oval-shaped mound, some sixty feet high, and as well as I remember, fifteen hundred paces in circumference. It is called popularly “the Indian Mound.” I regretted much the want of time and means to make an examination of it, which, from its extreme regularity of outline and justness of proportion it excites a wish to do, because one is persuaded that it is an artificial tumulus raised above the bones of some great tribe; and if so, is certainly the largest that has been discovered on the continent. Compared with this, the “burrows” and “cairns” of Europe, and even the mounds found N 5 274 on the upper waters of the Ohio, are insignificant. Will not some enterprising *virtuoso*, with time and money to spare, be the Layard of the West, and at least settle a vexed question by the pickaxe?

Library of Congress

Lower down still in the same valley, a few miles below Ottawa, is the celebrated Starvation Rock. Until within a few years the bones of the remnant of the tribe which were here destroyed might be seen upon its head: the incident is too familiar to require more than an allusion to the fact, that on this singular and isolated rock the remnant of an Indian tribe were leaguered by a war-party of their enemies, and after a heroism, suffering, and endurance, worthy of the Red Man, they eventually died to a man of starvation, and so were blotted out for ever.

The soil of the prairies is said to be the richest in the world. I have been assured, by an intelligent farmer, that he had raised crops for twenty years successively off a prairie without using any manure, or other stimulant. Water may be had in many places by a shaft of from twelve to eighteen feet, and the land when once broken is 275 easy of tillage; yet though capable of yielding luxuriant and profitable crops, those vast plains seem to me to be naturally suited for raising great quantities of sheep and cattle. And although in the winter the cold is very severe (the cutting winds seeming to sharpen their teeth in their course across the shrubless waste) so much so that instances have occurred of stage-drivers being frozen so severely as to die, yet, withal, to the emigrant or traveller, there are few more profitable or interesting locations for settlement or exploration than the rolling prairies of the west. I should have added, that the winters are severe, as alluded to above, only in the north; in the middle and southern part of Illinois and Missouri, the winter is mild and pleasant. In conclusion, I will venture to predict, that within a century this fair state of Illinois will be the centre of this mighty union—those vast savannahs, now traversed by the deer and wolf, will be teeming with a numerous population, who, like the patriarchs of old, will count their riches by the tens of thousands of their flocks and herds.

Having thus taken a glance at the prairies of 276 Illinois, we will next take a drive through the Oak Openings of Wisconsin.

At one o'clock of a clear frosty morning, I stood at the hotel door in Milwaukee, awaiting the arrival of the Western stage, and reflecting on the perfect stillness of the city's street—

Library of Congress

silent and lifeless as that spoken of in the Persian story of the “City of the Dead,” or as the virgin-forests that grew upon that very ground not twenty years ago: presently, the roll of wheels was heard, and soon the swinging heavy machine came rolling down the street, exhibiting in its traces a good team of four horses, and a driver so muffled up that even speech was a matter of effort.

“Is this the Janesville stage?” I enquired.

“Yeau!” came out through from the manifold depths of the muffler aloft, giving the reply quite a ventriloquous effect.

I jumped in, first putting up my trunk on the tray behind.

“Ged aupe!” shouted the muffled voice, and off we went.

At another hotel we stopped and took up three 277 ladies and one gentleman, who were permitted to enjoy the privilege of looking after themselves and baggage, as far as the ventriloquous driver was concerned. He is hired to drive—“an' a gentleman hadn't ought to carry round baggage if it warn't worth lookin' after.” Sound logic—I cogitated—equal rights and duties—this is a great country—and so we go.

After a little toe-treading, pardon-asking, bonnet-crushing, &c., we settled down convivially.

“All aboard!” said the hotel-keeper, who stood in the door without boots, coat, or hat.

“Ged aupe!” shouted the muffler, and we again got under weigh, heading south, and by west-half-west.

For the first fifteen or twenty miles our drive lay through the Milwakie woods, and what with the cold, rough road, dreary-looking trees, a thick ground fog, the silence of the company, and the absence of any symptom of breakfast, it did seem to me like a drive through those Tartarian woods which Dante, in his “Inferno,” has clothed with immortal horror! At length,

Library of Congress

came the cold grey dawn, struggling in through the leafless boughs of the surrounding forest—but anon! the rosy blush of morn spread itself upon the eastern sky, bringing, as well as certain poetic inspirations, the anticipation of fire and breakfast.

We stopped to deliver a way-mail, and as is usual, had to wait while the bag was being overhauled, which operation occupied about a quarter of an hour, and I am assured that it would not be safe for that postmaster, or any other, whose station is on a night-route, and about four miles from the breakfast tavern, to trust his character for eligibility to the passengers by stage. The house was located in from the road, with a very uncertain resemblance to a garden-patch in front. The driver had gone in, and come out again, ever and anon; one or another looked wistfully at the closed door, and wondered “if he had got through?” then the question was gravely put “how long the law allowed way-postmasters to sort?” by general vote this was settled at twelve minutes. Then it was suggested that ours was a small mail, and ought to be assorted in seven; (here a reference was made to watches), and the 279 time already past was ten minutes, “it was really too bad to have such postmasters.” Then there was a general silence, save the driver, who was performing Mary Blane in his muffler, and giving an accompaniment on the foot-board. Hereupon the other gentlemen got out, and went into the *parterre*, and plucked some poor pale little flowers, that had been hiding from the front, and in a melancholy attempt at gallantry presented them to one of the ladies. Twelve minutes came, the ladies grew resolute, and suggested a deputation. I was getting the door open in dutiful obedience, when out he came, threw up the bag to the driver, received a most ungracious look from one and all, which the poor man seemed used to, and on we went again; at seven o'clock we reached the tavern, where we found breakfast ready, at which we were served, under the denomination of “beef-steak,” with a certain dark-coloured ligament, which after considerable mastication I set down as portion of some venerable steer, and which my down-east fellow-traveller “guessed to be part of that keow which went into the ark.” In ten minutes our new 280 driver shouted “all aboard?” and off we rolled again, in much better spirits, although the steak was everlasting tough, and the coffee “a leetle the darndest

Library of Congress

fixin' west of the Alleghanies," if we were to believe the criticism of the flower-plucker. As we proceeded the country began to wear a better aspect, the sun rose brightly, the vapours rolled off rapidly, and the champaign came gradually to view, showing a range of forest-tops blending with the sky far away to the north-west, having the surface marked with frequent gorges of shade, that spoke of a slightly hilly formation of ground in that direction. The stage-road was now skirted by clearings, and the surrounding section bore a much more settled appearance than any we had hitherto passed; instead of the dense and dreary forest through which we had travelled, we now drove through thinly scattered woods of burr-oak, which peculiar formation of forestry is known as "the oak opening," presenting to the arboriculturist, a subject of study; to the artist and the lover of nature, scenes of sylvan loveliness seldom surpassed. The burr-oak is a low, or rather, a dwarfed tree, 281 with spreading, tough, and tortuous limbs, seeming to me to be of the same family as the live oak of Louisiana, though not attaining to the same size; but the chief peculiarity is the manner of their growth, looking as if they had been artificially planted, so as to leave numerous vistas, and fair green-sward patches, which give to the scene a regularity of beauty, which you would fain believe art had added to nature, forming the very ideal of such a place as in the summer time would be chosen for barbecues, camp-meetings, love-making, or lounging.

The autumn wind bore away continuous trophies of tinted leaves, which fluttered and whirled, and chased each other across our path, filling the way-side and hollows with a many-hued and rustling carpet. The sun-rays gilding the glades and tinting the forest-tops were not too ardent to sit under—so I took my place beside the driver. The scene and time was glorious. The air had that balmy yet bracing effect, peculiar to the breeze of the Indian summer, thus turning the spirit to a capacity of enjoyment, which under less 282 favourable circumstances can never be attained. The regular road being much cut up, we made a detour, in which we passed the border of a small tranquil, copse-fringed lake, which lay in quiet beauty, smiling in the sun-light, mirroring; as it had done for ages, those bosky banks and that blue sky. The wild duck swam in confidence on its waters

Library of Congress

unmolested by the cruelty of man, and you felt as you looked on the whole scene, that it was one of those which you saw just as it had come from the hand of the Creator.

In some twenty miles the oaks grew thinner as we verged upon the prairie, and in some seventy miles we were fairly in upon the meadow-sea. The night fell cold and starless. I had continued outside all day; and as way-passengers had been taken up, all was now full inside, so that, although the cold was biting, I had to bide it: it was very dark, and moreover we had but one lamp, and that lamp had a glass broken which made it flicker dismally. One of the leaders was balky—and one of the passengers (I speak for myself) was 283 as cross as Diogenes. We were on one of the longest changes too (I think it was twenty miles to the next team) and had one of the worst roads on the “hul line,” as our Jehu averred, who was one of the most cautious drivers (unfortunately) which he proved by proceeding at a walk; and so on we went—on—on—on—in the very blackness of darkness, for one—two—three hours. I at first had been desperate, and internally wished for anything to quicken our pace, or break the monotony, or the whipple tree or pole, or springs—anything in fact; but I had now settled down into a calm despair, and faced it out grimly. Occasionally a pale lightning would illuminate for a moment the wild plain around us, over which the wind whistled mournfully. In those glimpses the scene was the most cheerless imaginable—giving the original of that gloomy heath where the infernal hags gave their weird greeting to Macbeth. An additional charm was given by the inequalities of the ground, which would dip suddenly, and so pitchy dark was it that we only knew of it when we felt it; then down 284 went the brake. And “how! how!” shouted the driver, and down we swung, and reeled, and rolled!

The wheelers, being admirably trained, were our salvation. Our miserable lamp had been blown out ages ago, and I was so chilled that I began to speculate on the chances of my vitality lasting until we reached Janesville; I had not been prepared for an outside trip, and all sensibility in my legs and hands had disappeared; yet withal I kept my hopes alive by a vision of a good, fire and a warm supper. I think I dozed, but at last we came to some trees, and then we reached the brow of a hill, the driver put his team to a trot,

Library of Congress

and presently we saw the town dotted with lights away below. Nestling in the beautiful valley of Rock River, I felt a revival instantly, my feet began to pain me, the circulation was increased, and I did think that that town looked beautiful, as a devout Mussulman describes his seventh heaven to be. And, although we had not the white-winged camels to bring us there, which the prophet has provided for his followers, yet we had "a good team," when 285 they felt near the stable, and we put them to their mettle with a will; so that, in a short time, I was thawing my extremities at a good stove, and, shortly after partaking of a good supper, and then (so elastic is humanity) forgot the hardships of the evening, and set down in my memory, as now upon this page, my drive through the oak-openings as one of the most pleasing reminiscences of the West.

MOONLIGHT ON MICHIGAN.

The stars shone brightly in a beautiful field of azure heavens, cloudless, except at the horizon, where heavy masses fleecy vapour were piled up in irregular and fantastic forms. As we reached the bluffs on the western shore of Lake Michigan, the broad moon was struggling through this fleecy barrier into the clear field of the sky! Outspread before us lay the mighty inland sea in tranquil beauty, while in the dim distance appeared the shadowy outline of a ship, like some pale phantom of the waters, gliding along the lonely waste. Beneath us, down at the base of the bluffs, were a few fishermen's cottages, 286 (their skiffs drawn upon the beach, looking no larger than cobbles,) and hushed as though they contained no dwellers. The moonlight falling through the interstices of the clouds, formed a chequered roadway of light and shade, of ivory and amethyst, across the sleeping tide; at times, when behind some dense vapour-bank, it would disappear altogether, and anon, it formed a small oval island of silver on the verge of the lake's horizon. Then it would become a star, with quivering limbs of wavy light, and presently it flowed in a broad dazzling stream of rippled silver from the far distance to the base of the bluffs on which we stood.

Library of Congress

The dreamy and venerable woods, that seemed to have hushed their rustling leaves (which the riotous night-wind had been wooing with many a furtive kiss) into attention to the whispered murmurings of the ever-sighing tide. The sweet monotony of the flowing waters, and the deep repose of the hour, made up in their connection a scene of calm and saddening beauty. At such times we think of childhood, and home, and early love, and friends,—many of whom long long ago 287 have mingled with the elements, and recall those joys and hopes that have lain buried in the soul for years. It was one of those scenes that take from us at once the busy day-born cares of the present, and raise the spirit into communion with the past, evoking the better part of our nature, and leaving us better than we were.

By a natural transition our mind was insensibly led back to the beautiful panorama before us, and to that time, not many summers since, when, as we now stood and looked, the red warrior in his paint had gazed out upon that majestic water-sheet, when the forest leaf bore no trail from the foot of the pale face; but now the Mocassin of the Sioux leaves no track in the forest—no print upon the beach. A city (Milwakie) with its tens of thousands, occupies the spot where twelve years ago the wigwam stood, and the council-fire blazed. Then the waves of Michigan were rippled only by the slight canoe of the dusky Indian—now its waters are ploughed in every point by the swift steam-boat, or the stately ship. And so, the unsubdued though conquered native, is driven before the relentless 288 axe of the sturdy pioneer to seek fresh hunting-grounds in the western wilderness,—and so, he gradually disappears by the inevitable destiny of a natural law; hence, in a generation to come, his existence will be a tradition, his memory—a tale.

THE AMERICAN AUCTIONEER.

“And still they gazed, and still their wonder grew, How one small head could carry all he knew.”

Library of Congress

In every country, where he is to be found as a class, the “knight of the hammer” is a man to study and admire. The good auctioneer is always found to possess an extensive and practical knowledge of the selling value of men and things, *i.e.* what each is worth and can be bought for—quick-witted, shrewd, and humorous (for a lugubrious auctioneer is never a good one), he knocks off his joke when knocking down his lot, he revels in his power over the combative and avaricious feelings and impulses of his audience.

I have been ever inclined to look upon the auctioneer as a man beneficial to his race (I mean the model-auctioneer), as a pleasant ripple on the 289 dull stream of commercial exchange, a life some ray illuminating dusty reality of a furniture sale, without which one would not have an opportunity of getting so pleasantly cheated.

That the “old country” possesses some smart men in that profession no doubt can exist. Energy, wit, and practical talent can be found fully keeping up the character of the class; but, above and beyond the best old world specimen (towering like the Rhodian Colossus, so that “all the universal earth may sail at with his legs with skyscrapers and stunsels set”) stands the American auctioneer—the Pharos of his tribe—energy, extravagance, power of lung, wit, abuse, quickness, earnestness, perseverance, are by Brother Jonathan possessed beyond challenge.

I will not dwell further on the class than to mention the Peter Funk, of Broadway, who can put you into a fever of cupidity with “patent lever, j'wel'd sixteen holes, heavy cased war'nted superior English gold watch, goin' for four dollars an afe—an afe—an afe—an afe,” &c.

Not the real punch-like wit of Keese, or the terrible vehement velocity of the dry-good auctioneer, O 290 who display an account of earnestness perfectly tragic, but passing from the city I will introduce you to a twenty minutes' interview with a western gentleman of that profession in the horse-trade, premising that we shall only be able to get a skeleton outline of his power or capacity in any description that may be attempted.

The place is the Queen City, the time ten o'clock A.M. The scene a gateway leading to a long livery-stable, stalled on either side, and thronged with buyers, &c. Having forced my way through the crowd I succeeded in getting on a bench which commanded a good view of the scene of action. In the centre of the space there was an angular-looking horse, ridden by a square-looking boy, who made the said angular quadruped perform sundry geometrical figures: by the vigorous use of a formidable-looking spur on the left heel@, and a cowhide scourge in the opposite hand. On the opposite side, upon a small platform about thirty inches high, placed against the wall, stood the auctioneer. When I say *stood*, you must not understand me literally, but (in this instance) to mean that this platform supported 291 his body during those spaces of time that the said body was not propelled into the air by any of the gymnastic springs with which he “let off steam.” In person he was strongly-built—his throat and chest those of a gladiator—his head middle-sized, containing a pair of eyes sharp as a lynx, and crowned by a profusion of wiry dark hair, cast back in uncombed masses from a broad brow in the ultra-tragic style. As to the outer man, he had no coat on; his shirt open at the wrist and neck; his vest secured by the two lower buttons, and his pantaloons “hitched” on to his hips; his hat (a wide leafed Panama) was occasionally on his head, but generally reposed at his feet, where it was carefully cast in the paroxysms of his harangue; a pair of patent leather gaitershoes, and he is before you.

I should have mentioned his voice, which resembled that which we hear ascribed to Stentor or Tolmides, with this difference, that his had a degree of flexibility which we may doubt the possession of by the former notorieties, and a rapidity of utterance truly marvellous—so much for outline, now for detail:— o 2

292

The first part of the sale consisted merely of some violent shoutings to the boy, such as “come now,” “let out that horse, sir,” “let him slide,” “put him right through,” &c.; but by-and-by, when the boy and horse returned to the stand, and he had started the price, the paroxysms increased—his articulation became so rapid as to defy even the ear of

Library of Congress

a phonographist—his eyes flashed—he threw up his arms wildly—clapped his hands—and shook them till his fingers quivered with a tremulous anxiety to procure an advance—which, failing, he sprung into the air, and, on descending, stamped and kicked an emphasis to his reiterations with a force and energy that threatened the dissolution of the rostrum or his patent leathers; then, all at once, he swung on his hat, put his hands into his pockets, and asked, in a remonstrating tone, like that of a mild man who had been ill used —

“Gen'lem, I just want to ask this crowd if there's a citizen here that has more'n one eye, and that hears me when I tell him (his energy returns) that this horse (pointing at the said meek-looking quadruped with his foot) is warra-ted 293 sound! Six years and two months old! fourteen hands! will go double, single, lead, wheel or saddle—in buggy, waggon, sleigh, or fly—may be ridden or drove by man, woman, or boy—sound as a dollar, or no sale!—as good a horse, gen'lem, as ever wore hair!—a sound young country horse, fast and sure-footed!—can canter, pace, or gallop!—can be backed to trot his four mile in eleven minutes and thirty-five seconds; and leave out the big licks at that!—good as gold, for eighty dollars!—(here all the somewhat suspended energy returns) and I'm bid thirty-one and quarter!—one, one, once—wun, wun, wun, won—say two? See his paces, and hear his price—one au' afe, an afe, an afe—two, two, two, two, two, two—thirty-two I'm bid for this superior critter—thirty-two, and not a hair turned! (here he makes a pugilistic pass at the crowd, or some ideal combatant)—thirty-two, and sound at that!—thirty-two (swings in the hat)—thirty-two and no advance (gives another spring into the air, emphasising with his heel in coming down)—sell I will, and at thirty-two! for that well-bred, clean-jointed, warranted young horse!—thirty-two for 294 a critter that can amble like a buck—gallop agin a hurricane!—and trot down a locomotive!—thirty-two, say three? (sinks his voice)—Gen-'lem, that bid beats creation!—thirty-two—you want to rise my dander—you do—but I tell you I'm awful, so don't. Thirty-two I'm bid. Yes, *sir!* you can hitch him in and try.” This was said in reply to a chewer who had passively listened all the time to the emphasised qualification, and now asked with provoking scepticism—

“Wad the critter go in a buggy?”

“Sure to go, sir, or no sale! Shall I say half, sir—an afe, an afe, an afe, an afe—at thirty-two and afe going©going at thirty-two and afe, and at two and afe gone! Your horse, sir—there's the clerk, sir. Halloe there, boy, won't you bring out that airthquake? And *now*, gentlemen, *here is a horse!*—an animal that will come it tall, I tell you, or I can't see.”—Here he took out a plug of tabacco, and while he was conveying a goodly portion to his mouth, we collected ourselves and retired, satisfied for one day with the qualifications of one horse, and the stimulating rhetoric of our friend of the hammer.

295

A SKETCH “EN PASSANT.”

Our boat was crowded to excess as we left Chicago; and the cold, which was severe, became much more so when we got fairly out on the waters of Michigan. The lake was rough, and many among our passengers, especially in the ladies' cabin, were lake-sick; the more veteran travellers were gathered in groups on the sheltered side of the promenade deck, and about the cabin, discussing the merits of the fugitive law principally, or occasionally the more immediate question of the value of corn and hogs. When within sight of Kenosha—the point at which purposed getting out, I went on the lower deck to select and have ready my baggage; it was so crowded with deck-passengers that I had some difficulty in getting my trunks clear from the pile of baggage. When at length I had done so, I had leisure to look round at the passengers, and my attention was arrested by a group of emigrants, consisting of three men and two women—a second glance was not necessary to reveal their history:—the elder man was dressed in an old and much
296 worn shooting-coat, his trowsers to match, and hat and shoes bare and worn; his expression of face was that of care and poverty. The two younger men, with their well-cut shabby coats, buttoned up to the throat, stood aloof, pale and sullen. The ladies, respectively about nineteen and twenty-two years of age, were dressed alike, and the thin

Library of Congress

worn woollen shawls in which they were wrapped, elegantly withal, made one shiver to think how inadequate their protection from the chill, penetrating north wind.

The elder was what would be termed a fine person, her head was erect, her step firm, and her eye as proud as though she rustled in brocade; the younger was really handsome, but her step was less elastic, her large blue eye less resolute and more anxious, one fitted rather to glide gently down the stream of life, than to buffet the waves of its reverses; their faces were very pale, and altogether they looked in want of food and rest. Having shielded myself from observation, I continued to watch them, as they walked to and fro among the rude throng, for the purpose of keeping themselves comparatively warm. Leaning on 297 the gangway, which lay ready for launching, stood one of the sailors, a fellow with that air and manner which bespoke at once the foremost hand of a merchantman; his blue flannel shirt lay open at the throat, and his hat set well aback on his thickly curled head, his bold dark eyes roved incessantly about for some object to transfer their merriment to.

“You get out at this port, shipmate, do you?” he asked, addressing one of the young men alluded to.

“Yes,” answered the youth, with a-mind-your-own-affairs emphasis.

“Yes, sir, we get out at Kenosha,” said the elder man blandly, with the manner of a man whose principal capital lay in good manners.

“Then you'd better look alive, and have your traps handy, as we'll make only a short stay here,” said the sailor, and swinging off he looked at the two ladies as he passed, with that easy familiarity, which, to those reduced in circumstances, is the most humiliating proof of their changed fortunes. O 5

298

“Do you launch at the larboard or starboard?” I asked, as he approached.

Library of Congress

"Starboard, sir," he replied in the *patois* of a western Hibernian.

"You've been to sea?" I said.

"Yes, sir, for ten years," he answered.

"How do you like the 'laking' 'laking' compared with the blue waters."

"Oh I like the work and pay well enough, but a fellow can't enjoy himself much."

"As much as at sea, I imagine?"

"Yes, sir, but then when you get to port its quite different. Now I could have more divarshun in Liverpool for two shillings, than I could in Chicago for ten dollars, and what's the good of money if a man can't spend it pleasantly?"

Having got him fairly under way, I turned the subject.

"Speaking of the old country," said I; "are not these people you were speaking to from the old country?"

"Is it them green-horns?" said he, with the supercilious glance of a travelled man. "Oh, yes! they have just come out, only ten days 299 off sea, and by the powers the youngest is a beauty?"

"Where are they from?" said I.

"From Cork, sir," said he; "if you know where that is?"

"I do very well," said I; "I have been to the Cove and City. And those young ladies," I continued; "have been evidently well educated." his manner was changed in an instant, as he said with a serious shake of the head—

Library of Congress

"It's true for you, sir, God knows they were well reared; and more's the pity, poor creatures; for it's rough usage and little respect they'll get here on account of their blood. Heave out there," shouted the mate, as we came alongside the long wooden wharf, and my informant cutting short his commentary, jumped to his station, leaving me to meditate or moralise on the history of the party alluded to.

Following up the train of thought, Fancy took the rein, and I saw them "at home" in the old and comfortable and elegant dwelling, that had sheltered their forefathers for centuries, surrounded by all the necessaries and luxuries of 300 life. Then came the gradual but certain pressure of the times; the relinquishing, one by one, the comforts which use had almost rendered necessaries. Then retrenchments, loans, debts, and finally the "sale by auction," the sacrilegious parade and barter for the old familiar furniture, paintings, &c., each clustering thick with memories of the past. Then the gathering together of the scanty little, saved from the wreck of fortune, and the last resource and resolve to "go to America," for at home, "they could not work, to beg they were ashamed." Then came the disgust depravities of a voyage in a crowded emigrant ship. The foolish efforts, at first to preserve their state; the victimising at every point, and now at last here they were at the end of their journey and the beginning of life, about to seek and win from the wilds of Wisconsin, a heritage and independence, which, though requiring labour to attain, would be, when conquered, free from the burdens and trammels of their former homestead, and would render them in the acquisition—happier and better men and women.

301

ICE IN ERIE

Owing to the rapidity with which railroads are now binding and belting the States, many of the incidents of a western trip will become, in a few years, as much matters of myth as the marches of Daniel Boone: so that I may be permitted, for the benefit of the antiquary, to give a rapid sketch of a trip from Buffalo to Erie in the olden time (1851).

Library of Congress

At Buffalo we found the hotels crowded and every day a bulletin was issued after breakfast of the state of the lake and the probability of a boat getting in. The hotel-keepers and clerks sanguine as to the impossibility of the ice holding on longer than another day at farthest, and replete with instances stretched over ten years—aye, fifteen years, of the days and dates and manner of the lake openin—at length some ten of us finding that our bill, although increasing daily, seemed not to hasten our exodus—determined to go up to Silver Creek, some thirty-five miles distant, when the telegraphic dispatch averred boats were coming 302 from and going to Cleveland every day; but then the roads were awful—and we had to go through the Cattaragus swamp, &c. Well—we weighed the pro and con—and finally determined to do or die; and so we hired a spring waggon to hold the party, among whom were four ladies—and another auxiliary for the baggage; and early one fine, clear, cold morning went upon our way rejoicing, for a mile or two of plank road. All went well, but anon we got on the swamp road, and now our sorrows commenced. Presently the wheels sunk to the hubs—the horses plunged and struggled, and we had to get out—the mud being fabulously deep. With occasional assistance we got along until noon, when the springs broke, and we had to go to the nearest farmer's house and hire a mud-waggon, in which primitive and comfortless vehicle we packed the ladies and continued on our way. A snowstorm came on in the afternoon of great violence, and our progress was most laborious; but we persevered—in fact that was our only hope—for we had to make a house which was yet 303 four miles distant where we should stop over night. At last one of the horses gave out, and we had to unhitch him and send a man on to the tavern to have a horse sent to us—and thus we toiled on until about nine o'clock P.M. We arrived wet, wearied, and famishing, at the tavern, having travelled eighteen miles in fifteen hours. Late next night, after a similar day—we arrived at Silver Creek, where we found in the two taverns about 250 people, all waiting for a boat to get in. Having devoutly consigned Cattaragus swamp, telegraph company, livery-men, &c. to the prospective indignation of an indignant world—we concluded to wait for fortune a day or two. Next morning there were general excitement and great joy, as the lookout party on the bluffs reported a steamer making in. I went up, and there she was truly—but a great distance

Library of Congress

off, and no visible inlet in the great field of ice that embayed the shore for miles; and, as was to be expected, after a fruitless attempt for some two hours to get in, she reversed her course and stood away up the lake. We had cleared away a space 304 in the snow and lighted a fire, round which we now held a council; and some eight proposed to line an extra stage to Erie—where the chances of a boat were much more favourable. This we effected for a consideration of 40 dollars; and, once again, encountered the perils of the road. We had good fortune, however, and good humour, so that without being overturned, and with high glee at our situation compared to those who stayed behind (some of whom had been waiting a week) we completed our journey by the morning of the following day. Since then I have been over the same ground, from Buffalo to Erie, in nine hours—so much for steam: yet even then the troubles of travel were not wholly vanished. It was stated for a week before I left New York, that boats left Erie daily for all the ports up the lake; and somehow, one gets the idea that if truth is to be found anywhere out of her ancient abode, the “well,” it would be in telegraphic communication; but alas and alack, even the lightning will lie like a gambler at the bid of Plutus.

We got on board a boat. The harbour was 305 quite clear of ice, and no doubt existed in our mind of an easy passage. We left after sundown, and bore away in good style. When well afloat, supper was served, and “all went merry as a marriage-bell,” when, hark! there is a sudden ringing of the engine bells—a sliding crunch—and we are still.

On going out, the scene that met my eye was grand, however annoying. We were, for about forty feet of our bow, firmly embedded in a field of ice, some four feet thick, our stern swinging in clear water. A few rods a-head of us lay, completely embedded, the vessel which had sailed in the morning; and another steamer, with three hundred passengers, had drifted some ten miles down the lake, and, being short of fuel and provision, was in a sad state, and had been at this time five days in that position.

A meeting of our passengers was called—we had about two hundred and forty on board—for the purpose of compelling the captain to return with us while he had yet an opportunity.

Library of Congress

But he replied that to do so would be to lose a thousand dollars, and, he guessed, if we gave 306 him time, until the morning, he'd get us through. We did so, and, early in the morning, we got a number of men with axes out, and commenced cutting the bow clear. We had quite a realizing sense of Sir John Franklin's difficulty; the only difference being, that no Polar bears were visible, and, that we were seeking a south-west passage. The field-ice seemed about four feet thick, with under-drift, that probably existed for four more. As far as we could see, it appeared a field of ice, with occasional streaks of clear water.

About nine o'clock we were cut out. And now we commenced feeling for thinner ice, which we ran tilt against, and backed off again, at each time cutting off large pieces and cracking a passage. In about four hours we reached the steamer that had been embayed, and cut her out, and then succeeded in breaking through into a channel of clear water. The captain of the vessel we freed (an old Scot) put back, but our skipper (a Yankee) went a-head. We now ran the gauntlet between masses of field-and hummock-ice, and shortly made out a steamer—bearing 307 down in our course, from the speed with which she neared us. We judged she was in slush-ice: and so it proved, for in two hours we passed her, she getting into our channel, we into hers; and, although a heavy snow-storm now set in, we had a comparatively pleasant voyage to Cleveland.

AN EXPLOSION.

It is a sad fact—to which the immediate and energetic attention of the Congress of the United States should be devoted—the prevalence of explosions on the Western waters. I will describe the account of one, the effects of which I was witness to, namely, that of the ill-fated “Red Stone” packet, which plied between Madison and Cincinnati. In April, this year, I was on the “Ben Franklin”—the regular packet for Louisville—and we were second boat up, reaching the wreck two hours after the casualty.

As we approached the wreck, which showed only the tops of the wheel-houses above water, we observed that the trees opposite where the 308 explosion took place, were filled,

Library of Congress

in their topmost branches, with fragments of clothing, furniture, mattresses, &c. From this point the hull had drifted down a few rods, where it lodged. We rounded-to, and proceeded on shore. On all sides—even at this considerable distance—were strewn fragments of furniture, passengers' trunks, &c.; while, a little further on, lay portions of the machinery and great pieces of the boiler, torn like paper.

On arriving opposite where she blew up, there lay a huge piece of the boiler, which had struck and cut down a large tree. Immediately in the vicinity were two bodies, not yet cold: one, that of a passenger, and one seemingly a deck hand. The former seemed to have been killed by the steam. He had no mark of external violence. The other had had a piece of the boiler blown through his head. At this point the banks were sixty feet high, on which, in the front and top, was a growth of heavy timber. We went up, and found two bodies, which had been thrown four hundred yards over this bank into a ploughed field: and near them another piece of the boiler. 309 At a small log-house, had been gathered any of the dead and dying found up to that time—presenting a most horrible and piteous spectacle.

A peculiarly harrowing incident was that of a young clergyman who had been down to see his parents, and was returning for his Sabbath duties—for whom, in fact, the steamer had put in. His parents and sisters were still on the shore, waving him adieu, when he was blown into eternity; and, up to the period of our visit, the distracted family had only found a small portion of a carpet-bag which he had at the moment in his hand.

We took a portion of the wounded on our boat, and a few that had escaped scatheless. Among the latter were two men, who gave a remarkably clear and cool account of the transaction. One—a large, powerfully-built man—stood with his back to the stove, his clothes not yet dry, and commenced talking of the matter, much as if it had been an incident of the river twenty years ago. And his companion—who sat next me at supper, and who showed no sign of injured nerves, if appetite 310 was any proof—gave me, as a reply to my question, “If he did not feel grateful for so wonderful an escape?”

Library of Congress

“Wa'll, yes! I guess it was a pretty bod fix—won't you pass those mutton-chops?”

Those two men had been standing at the bar drinking in the front of the boat, and the larger man was in the act of putting his hand in his pocket to get his money-wallet, when instantly they were enveloped in smoke-steam, fragments of wood, &c., and presently felt themselves in the air. The next moment they fell in the river, and being powerful swimmers, succeeded in making the shore.

The loss of life was supposed to be 60. On the same day at St. Louis another boat, the “Glencoe,” blew up, killing some 120. The same week the “Saluda” blew up at Lexington on the Missouri, killing an unascertained number, and also the “Pochahontas” on the Arkansas.

In most instances those fearful accidents arise from racing, and a reckless carelessness of human life. Now in France there is a law that any captain of a steamboat proved to have been 311 racing, is condemned to prison and hard labour for four years. Some such stringent and condign law is needed to protect the lives of citizens on the great rivers of the West.

And now, kind reader, we will for the present part; and if you have found in the foregone pages matter for amusement, reflection, or instruction, my object is achieved; and mayhap we may become acquainted again in other scenes, or another hemisphere.

THE END.

LONDON: Printed by Samuel Bentley and Co., Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

277949 etc. 11-6365-D